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Puerta del Perdón
(Gate of Pardon)

CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLA.

THE
CITIES AND WILDS
OF
ANDALUCIA.

BY
THE HON^{BLE} R. DUNDAS MURRAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE CITIES AND WILDS OF ANDALUCIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOVILIZADOS—THE CALLEJUELAS—LA PUEBLA—PLAIN OF
THE GUADALQUIVIR — POSADAS — THE SPANISH ASS—ALMO-
DOVAR DEL RIO.

IN the phraseology of modern Spain, the assault and spoliation of travellers on the king's highway is not designated as it is everywhere else, a highway robbery, but is somewhat ambiguously styled a "novedad" or novelty. Of late no novelties of this disagreeable kind had occurred on the road from Constantina to Puebla de los Infantes; but as a portion of it, from time immemorial, had borne the worst of characters, I deemed it best to provide

myself with a party of men as a protection to my person and baggage. The men were movilizados, a body whose duty is to patrol the roads and keep them clear of brigands. For this service they were admirably adapted, chiefly from the fact of their being natives of the vicinity, and in possession of that knowledge of the country, its paths, and haunts for desperate characters, without which brigandism can never be effectually extirpated from the localities in which it has taken root.

At four in the morning we started, just as the light enabled the eye to see objects distinctly. Foremost rode my escort, whose attire and accoutrements would have raised a smile at the Horse Guards. Their dress—for uniform it could not be called—consisted of a short jacket, conical hat, and the leather leggings worn by the country people. At the right side hung a short escopeta or fowling-piece, hooked to the saddle, but in such a way as to be withdrawn and discharged at a moment's notice; at the left depended a straight sword in a rusty scabbard. In front of the high-peaked saddle each rider bestrode, was doubled a cloak; while behind there rose a pile of mantas and horse-cloths nearly reaching to their shoulders. Such is the style in

which these men make their patrols; if benighted, they dismount and hobble their horses; the mantas are spread on the ground, and rolled in their cloaks they sleep soundly beneath the starlit sky. Away at daybreak, over sierra and dehesa, by tracks rarely trodden except by the contrabandista or brigand, they pursue their march; veiling their movements with such art as to come upon the haunts of the evil-doers at the moment when their presence is least expected. It is this independent style of acting, added to the secrecy attending their expeditions, which makes them so formidable to the robber population of the provinces; and whenever they have been extensively employed, the beneficial effects of their services have strikingly contrasted with the inefficiency of the regular troops engaged in the same vocation. The proceedings of the latter being more open to observation, could not fail to give timely warning to those against whom they were directed.

The conversation was not long in turning upon the exploits of my companions. Last year they seized three men, whose crime was horse-stealing. The robbers were drinking in a tavern in Las Navas, little suspecting the approach of the justicia,

when they were surprised, bound hand and foot, and conveyed towards Constantina. The justicia, however, entertained no thoughts of burthening that town with their support; and upon reaching a favourable spot, that is, some ravine by the wayside, they were sternly told that their moments were numbered. The criminals prayed for a priest to confess them ere they died, but that wish was refused by their captors; who observed, that those who committed murder—as they, it appears, had done—by assassination, had no right to that preparation for death they had denied to their victims. The “*cuatro tiros*” then stretched them on the ground, and their corpses were borne into Constantina on the backs of the horses they had stolen. These summary proceedings would probably be tolerated nowhere but in Spain. Here, however, in consequence of the corruption prevailing among the ministers of justice, and the facilities afforded to the escape of the worst malefactors by means of bribery or fraud, public feeling is little disposed to arraign the man who compels the law-breaker to pay on the spot the penalty of his crimes. This latitude may on the whole be conducive to the ends of justice, but it is obviously fraught with

many evils: instances, indeed, are not wanting, where it has been abused to gratify revengeful passions, under the cloak of zeal for the public service.

Through a wild country we slowly journeyed till the callejuelas were reached, whereupon my escort showed more caution in their movements; they now advanced, as the proverb has it, "la barba sobre el hombro." One rode on a little in front, while the other placed himself in the rear of the party, to be ready against any sudden onslaught upon that quarter. The callejuelas are so called from the nature of the road, which here, as in many parts of the country where the soil is clayey, has been so worn down by constant traffic as to become a narrow and deep ravine between perpendicular sides. Hence it is peculiarly fitted for sudden attacks: from the nature of the ground, a traveller can receive no intimation of danger before a musket is presented at his breast, and the dreaded "Boca abajo" salutes his ears. The place, therefore, had become the subject of a local proverb, "Para robar, las callejuelas." However, nothing stirred as we wound in silence through the hollow way; and in another hour La Puebla de los Infantes came into view. La Puebla had once its castle, whose ruins crown

an eminence not far distant: doubtless the village itself had its palmy days when knights and men-at-arms had their watch on these crumbling towers; but now it seems to have survived the era to which it belonged, and only exhibits a sad spectacle of decay and poverty. Here the services of my escort terminated, and grateful men were they for the remuneration they received for the morning's ride. It was no great matter, to be sure, but then their pay was five months in arrear, for her Majesty of Spain is by no means noted for the punctual discharge of her servants' hire; and to men thus situated, such casual supplies are of no slight importance. From La Puebla the path led through olive-plantations, by a gradual descent; and indeed, since leaving Constantina, our progress had been unceasingly down hill: at length, on rounding a high ridge, there opened upon the sight, stretching far to the left and right, the vast plain of the Guadalquivir. It was a noble prospect: as far as the eye could reach, fields of ripe grain succeeded each other without intermission, no other object breaking the yellow expanse than here and there a clump of olives. Hamlets, farm-houses, cottages, there were none; nothing to tell by whose hands was prepared

the scene of fertility we witnessed; so that in its unbroken loneliness there was something sad in the prospect. Hence, turning to the left, we skirted the base of the sierra as it sank into the plain, advancing along the right bank of the river, and about midday reached Pasadas.

My muleteer led the way to one of the three wretched posadas the village possesses. On entering by the open gateway, we found the caravanseraï occupied by a band of muleteers, who at this season of the year, in order to escape the scorching heat, travel by night and take their repose during the day. In all corners were piled up bales of goods, upon which they were sleeping, undisturbed by the noise and bustle that reigned in the place. As usual, the innkeeper and his household, lolling in their low chairs, took no further notice of our arrival than by staring fixedly at us; for which I speedily gave them sufficient cause, by tumbling one of the young fry from his seat and installing myself therein. An introduction being thus effected, the customary questions, as to where I was going, and from whence I came, were put, and commented on by the family after I had duly answered them; so that matters being now in a

good train, I ventured to inquire if there was any apartment where I might in solitude follow the example of the sleeping muleteers around me. A closet, partitioned off from the general saloon, was pointed out as the only nook fit for such a purpose ; and, moreover, the luxury of a bed was promised. Forthwith a couple of muleteers were summarily ejected from the chamber, into which they had surreptitiously crept, and in the following moment I was told that all was prepared. Little preparation, it must be confessed, was necessary ; a mattress on the floor, a couple of sheets, and a pillow, completed the arrangements here, as in the other minor towns and villages of the province. Sleep, however, shunned this tempting couch, though I courted it long. In truth, the atmosphere of my dingy cabin was like that of an oven, and would have suffocated any one who had not been well seasoned to the intense heat of the Andalucian dog-days : even the thousand carnivorous inhabitants that harbour in a Spanish inn, to prey upon the luckless traveller, seemed to have found it too hot ; all had fled, happily for me, and gone to seek some cooler clime. Unrefreshed, I rose, and wandered forth in the cool of the evening to the banks of the river. On the

opposite side, a hundred feet below me, again commenced that broad level which spreads from the river till it is checked by the sierras of Moron and Estepa, and forms the plain of the Guadalquivir. But on the side on which I sat all was reversed: my position was on an elevation that rose abruptly from the river brink, and marked the extremity of an upland region which here gave place to the great plain. Many leagues to the southwards the land rose again into rugged ridges, whose march towards the south was once more cut off by a valley broader and deeper than the first: these heights were the sierras of Ronda and Granada, and the valley at their feet was filled with the tideless waters of the Mediterranean.

Within gun-shot of my post, a ferry-boat was plying on the river, conveying passengers and animals across; the exclamations of the men engaged in its operations were the only sounds that broke upon the stillness of the evening. Presently a troop of donkeys approach at a clumsy trot; and the men having espied them, make fast their bark to the bank. The labours of the animals are at an end for the day: and each one, released from the heavy sack of grain that has probably burthened its back since

daylight, is now vying with its fellows in its haste to reach home: from the tin bells attached to their necks there rises a jingling accompaniment, which seems to be enjoyed amazingly by the rabble rout. On gaining the edge of the steep slope leading down to the river, the coryphæus halts, and eyes doubtfully the slanting path by which he must scramble downwards; "Arre burro," however, urges him forward, and with cautious step and slow he descends, the rest following in single file. Just at the foot of the declivity, a *mauvais pas* lies before him. The path, besides being more precipitous than anywhere else, is slippery and wet from the wash of the stream; and at the bottom the side of the boat rises with an ugly look, and threatens to fracture his limbs should a false step occur on the treacherous slope. The poor brute feels himself to be in a dilemma, and looks wistfully to the right and left, but there is no help for him; accordingly, "Haciendo de tripas corazon," he plants his four feet together, slides down, slowly at first, but with accelerated speed as he descends. He reaches the boat, and seems on the point of being shot under the keel, when, rising nimbly, he clears the gunwale in the style of a hunter, and lands safely in the interior. The others

imitate his movements with more or less success, and in due time the boat discharges its four-footed freight on the opposite shore. Then once more they set off, jostling each other in their hurry, and sending forth from their bells a din that is heard long after they themselves have vanished from sight beneath the deepening shades. The Spanish ass, however, is a very different animal from his English brother. Here he is no longer the stunted and diminutive starveling one has been accustomed to see, but a much larger and more powerful beast, and evidently at home in the warmer climate of the South. From that circumstance he derives a share of animal spirits very much at variance with our notions upon that point. A lively donkey seems to us an impossibility; nevertheless, there are many such to be found in this land of contradiction.

Before daylight I was summoned forth by Ximenes, who had everything prepared for our departure. Upon emerging from my den, a curious scene presented itself: the space in front was covered with sleeping figures, among whom I had some difficulty in picking my steps. Their couches consisted merely of a manta or mat spread upon the sharp points of the flinty pavement, and upon this they

were sleeping more soundly than many a lover of ease on his bed of down. In one corner lay the infant daughters of my host, clasped in each other's arms; and by their side another form, rolled in a sheet, which I presumed was their mother. Neither she nor the other recumbent members of the household unclosed an eye, though our steeds clattered noisily over the threshold; and without a word we passed into the street. The change from the stifling atmosphere of the inn to the cool morning air was as refreshing as the cup of water to the parched wayfarer; my spirits rose as I inhaled the fresh breeze that came down from the sierras; every muscle seemed new-strung, and I felt myself equal to a much longer journey than was in prospect for me that day. Our road continued for a league or more through a rugged portion of the sierra; the river being on the right hand, and sometimes coming into view. After crossing numberless brooks we descended by a broken path to the larger stream of the Guadiato. It was spanned by a bridge, which the movilizados had applied to other uses than those contemplated by its founders: over the low parapets they had lately precipitated a robber whom they had caught, and deemed unworthy of expiating his

crimes by the "cuatro tiros." From the scene of this extempore execution, a short ride brought us to the castle of Almodovar, whose square towers had been visible from a great distance. Nothing could be more suggestive of strength than the aspect of this fortress, perched on the summit of a singular peak that terminates a low spur running out into the plain. Crowning, as it did, the summit of an isolated pinnacle, it looked, even in its ruins, the image of a robber castle, the lord of which might with impunity exact contributions from the passing traveller, or scour the plain at the head of his vassals. In the time of the Moors its reputation was high as a place of strength. Hither one of the petty tyrants who lorded it over a fragment of the once united and powerful Moorish kingdom—Aben Mohamed, chief of Baeza, directed his flight, in the hope of braving behind its walls the wrath of his subjects, which had been aroused by the surrender of many castles into the hands of their arch-enemy, the sainted King Ferdinand; but being hotly pursued, he was overtaken, and his head struck from his shoulders. .*

At a later period it was the prison of Doña Juana de Lara, suzerain of Biscay, whom Peter the

Cruel deprived of her liberty, and some time afterwards, although she was his sister-in-law, put to death in Seville. By the same ferocious king were deposited here the royal treasures; and, in a word, it was used as a prison and a stronghold, but more frequently in the former capacity, during some of the most stormy periods of Spanish history. At length, on the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, strife was banished from the land, and since that period its name has disappeared from the page of history.

Thenceforward we pursued our way along a dusky track which crossed the plain in a direct line for Cordova; and on gaining a slight eminence, the spires and domes of the city were descried rising from amid a dark belt of trees that hid its walls from view. As we approached the ancient capital of Andalucia, I looked around for some traces of the magnificent summer palace which was erected on this side of the city by Abderahman the Third, and was celebrated as a miracle of Moorish art and splendour. It was beyond reason to expect a vestige of the perishable adornments of that retreat—of its spacious gardens, diversified with every rare flower and tree—its laurel and myrtle groves and numerous fountains; but

surely a relic might be visible of its halls, its mosque, pavilion, and artificial mount, from which the monarch was wont to contemplate the distant city and the beauties of the surrounding landscape. Where, too, were the four thousand three hundred elaborately wrought pillars that entered into the construction of this abode of luxury? Alas! of these, as of the marble so prodigally lavished as to be employed in paving the stables, not a memorial remained; and but for the testimony of historians, it would be hard to believe that Medina Azahara ever rose from the ground and covered a wide space with sumptuous edifices.

Making a circuit, during which we traversed the deserted alameda, and moved under the shadow of the sunburnt walls of the city, we entered by one of its gates, having passed several others which Spanish laziness or jealousy had walled up. After undergoing the necessary scrutiny from the custom-house officials, we wended our way through silent streets to the Fonda, which I found to be one of the best I had yet encountered in Andalucia. Here my compact with Ximenes terminated; and as that personage now disappears from the scene, I dismiss him with the remark, that nature had selected him

to act on this world's stage the part of those walking gentlemen who come on and go off with small accompaniment of speech. For an Andalucian and an arriero, he was as reserved and uncommunicative as any I ever met; what he did say, moreover, was couched in such thick and guttural tones, as rendered his language as unintelligible to myself as it was to the idlers of Cordova, to whom he addressed himself for information regarding the proper pilotage to the hotel. Such being the colloquial powers of my companion, I was not sorry when the clipped Castilian of a Cordovese waiter put an end to the silent meditations in which I had perforce indulged for the best part of the preceding forty-eight hours.

CHAPTER II.

CAPABILITIES OF THE SIERRAS I TRAVERSED — PHILIP THE SECOND HAD TAKEN THE SAME ROUTE — CORDOVA — THE MOSQUE—ITS HISTORY—DULNESS OF CORDOVA—ITS FORMER GREATNESS — SPANISH DOCTORS—THE DREADFUL SECRET—DEPART FOR ALMADEN DEL AZOGUE—VILLAHARTA—THE SUSPICIOUS SECRETARY—MY ESCORT—SANTA EUFEMIA — MILITARY PRECAUTIONS—ALMADEN—FLINTER—HIS GALLANT DEFENCE OF THE TOWN, AND SUBSEQUENT FATE—THE MINE—PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF THE MERCURIAL VAPOUR — ANTIQUITY OF THE MINE—RETURN TO CORDOVA—THE SUN-HATING ALFEREZ.

As my mule paced slowly along the rugged tracks I have just described, I caught myself more than once speculating upon the capabilities of the mountain region they traversed. Every step disclosed the traces of neglected advantages and resources undeveloped; and beholding these I revolved in my mind all the wonders that might be wrought by directing thitherwards the march of improvement under a wise and enlightened government; how much might be done to draw forth the

natural riches of the soil, and to call into activity the energies of its population, at present repressed by the deadening influence of legislative measures, of which the least that one can say is, that they are conceived in the worst spirit of the dark ages. Let there be an end to the prohibitive code that serves only to fill the custom-houses with corrupt officials, and the land with lawless contrabandistas. Let the agricultural and mineral wealth of the country rise to its proper place among the national resources, for in this lies its real strength: for that end, let the facilities of transport be multiplied, and a prospect afforded to the agriculturist and the miner, that the products of their labours shall be no longer valueless from want of access to the nearest markets.

How much might be effected by good roads! As I pictured to myself broad and practicable highways penetrating among those valleys where the mule with difficulty maintains its footing, I beheld in my mind's eye a magical change come over their untilled slopes; the wild lavender and gum cistus supplanted by fields and pastures extending up their sides; each mine of copper, iron, and lead, in full operation, and yielding employment to a numerous population; and last, though not least,

the vintages of these mountains, all of which are highly palatable, and some rivalling in flavour and delicacy those of the Rhine, descending towards the coast in goodly casks, similar to those that every day of the year may be seen on the road between Xeres and its seaport. All these visions might come to pass—but when? Not until there be swept away the thick cloud of ignorance, prejudice, and self-satisfaction, which yet overshadows the land; nor until its people and rulers awake to the conviction, that by practical measures of improvement, and by a liberal commercial policy, will they recall the greatness their forefathers lost to themselves and their descendants by a grasping, narrow, and monopolizing spirit. Such a conviction will, in Spain, be the slow growth of years, perhaps ages.

It would have given an additional interest to the route I selected, had I known at the time that a monarch and all his court had in other days made it the scene of a royal progress. When the last rebellion of the Moors was at its height among the inaccessible regions of the Alpuxaras, Philip the Second resolved to take up his residence in Cordova, in order to be nearer the seat of war.

With this object he departed from Madrid, not by the usual road across the Sierra Morena, but by the circuitous and little trodden track through Constantina, Cazalla, and Almodovar del Rio. The chroniclers of the time say little in regard to the events of his journey through the mountains, but reserve their powers to describe his entrance into the city, and the fêtes that awaited him there.* The gate by which he entered was hung with cloth of gold; the streets through which the procession advanced were shaded with awnings; and from the balconies and windows floated hangings of crimson and other colours—a custom still to be witnessed in Spain upon festival days. Surrounded by his courtiers, the King rode slowly on, attired as was his custom in black—a colour that corresponded well with his dark and sombre character—and reached the Corredera or great square of the city. Here he was observed to lift his eyes from the ground and attentively survey the square, its proportions and long lines of windows on each side—a thing, say they, no one had ever seen him do before. From thence his majesty proceeded to the cathedral, where he heard mass, and with this solemnity concluded his first appearance in state

before his faithful Cordovese. A few days subsequently another procession wound through the streets to the church of San Aciselo and San Victoria—two saints and martyrs whose names figure among the illustrious obscure of the Romish calendar. Upon reaching the gate, the devout monarch threw himself from his horse and crawled upon his knees to the place of their interment, the whole crowd of courtiers and attendants dutifully following their master's example. But enough of this strange compound of fanaticism and magnificence.

"Conduet me to the 'Catedral,'" I said to the cicerone supplied by the fonda, a slender stripling encased in scarlet inexpressibles and a "caleseros," an embroidered jacket, and whose sole qualification for his office was an inordinate propensity to talk, but not to the purpose.

"The Catredal!" he exclaimed in his Cordovese patois; "you mean la Mesquita."

"Yes, the mosque," I rejoined; and accordingly we entered a gloomy labyrinth of narrow streets, scarcely a fathom wide, and still narrower alleys, from the bottom of which all that we discerned of the heavens was a slender streak of blue.

"Very narrow is this street," said my loquacious attendant, stopping short in one through which we were passing, and touching with his hands the walls on either side of him; "very narrow, but the calle Besa Mozas is worse than this!"

"Besa Mozas!"* I repeated; "that is a very strange name for a street. How did it originate?"

"Why, the street is so very, very narrow, that two people cannot pass without jostling each other, even if they turn sideways; and therefore it may happen, if you meet a señorita, that——" Here he paused, and the rest of his information was conveyed by a pantomime descriptive of a figure with its back to the wall, but inclining the head forwards and imprinting a salute upon an imaginary pair of lips.

At length we reached a spot where a segment of the sky might be discerned; for nothing but a high wall, supported by massive buttresses, was before us. I then followed my conductor beneath a horse-shoe arch in the supposed wall, and suddenly found myself standing on the threshold of the most singular of Christian temples. Looking straight before me, I beheld an assemblage of slender pil-

Kiss girls.

lars that rose in countless numbers from the pavement, and formed a throng amid which no definite object was visible: nothing but columns confusedly intermingled caught the eye; those in the foreground standing out in relief, those in the distance closing in so as to perplex the vision and finally baffle its powers. All that I had heard and read of this sanctuary was completely realised: before me was literally a grove of columns, as it had been truly called; and when a figure appeared in its depths, flitting across in the gloomy light, seen one moment and hid the next by an intervening shaft, I felt that a similar spectacle could only be witnessed within the heart of a forest. In proportion, however, as I advanced into the interior, though the illusion was still unimpaired, traces of order and architectural regularity became apparent. The columns were planted in long ranks, at measured though short distances from each other, and at the height of ten or twelve feet were spanned by Moorish arches in double tiers. Upon these rested the roof, disproportionately low considering the great dimensions of the edifice, but perhaps on that account enhancing the general effect, which on the whole was strange and startling. The vacant

spaces between these columns form what might be termed vistas, down which the beholder may pace until he reaches at the further end some chapel or gate with which each terminates. Of these aisles, as they would elsewhere be styled, there are twenty-nine ranging from east to west, and nineteen from north to south; the number of pillars exceeds eight hundred—a prodigious amount to be collected under the same roof; and while they are generally surmounted by Corinthian capitals, the shafts display every variety of hue and material—jasper, porphyry, and marble vying with each other in all the colours of the rainbow. I am not, however, going to borrow a page from Mr. Murray's Handbook, where, I doubt not, all these and other details are duly inserted; and I refrain therefore from touching upon the numberless objects of interest that here invite the attention of the scholar or antiquary; but it would be unpardonable to omit noticing the Zancarron, or chapel of Mohamed, the beauty of which as it now exists attracts the wondering eyes of strangers hardly less than it did those of the worshippers who once crowded into its precincts with prayers on their lips. On the southern side may be observed three compartments, conspicuous

for the superior richness of their decorations and the beauty of the columns and arches that mark their limits. All that could most captivate an Oriental fancy is gathered here to adorn this "holy of holies;" the architectural embellishments are woven into a maze of convolutions indescribably fantastic, and unsurpassed in profusion by any other portion of the mosque: wherever an even surface occurs, it is overspread with arabesques that display the brightest colours—red and gold alternating with black. This is particularly to be noticed in the centre compartment, where a horse-shoe archway in the wall disencloses an inner room, or rather aleove. Upon the wall are multiplied Arabic inscriptions in black and gold; and looking up, the most delicate tracery leads the eye to the roof, which is adorned with gilding. Passing under this archway you find yourself in an oratory of an octagon shape, the roof and floor of which are of pure white marble, while arches and columns stand out from the walls. Here was deposited the Coran. Of one thing I felt assured, as I entered and felt the marble pavement hollowed under my feet—that hundreds and thousands must have passed through ere the threshold could have been worn down so deeply as it

was. Nothing proclaimed the reality of the past so much as this: the gorgeous and lavish decorations in sight reminded you only of the skill and fancy of those who designed them, but here, underfoot, was a silent witness to the existence of a race of worshippers now passed away. It told that a living stream must have rolled over the spot ere it could have been channelled as it was; and not only that successive generations had come here to worship, but that they had lived and died as masters in the land. To tread upon marble from the entrance-gate to this sanctuary—to walk amid hundreds of columns of the same costly material—no professors of a tolerated creed could have done this, but only the arbiters of a nation's wealth and resources, and the sharers in its pride.

From the remains of these elaborate embellishments, some idea may be formed of the original splendour of the mosque, when not this portion alone, but the whole of the interior, was a scene of decorative art, fresh and vivid to the eye. Time, however, has destroyed and defaced wherever it was possible, and cast a sad-coloured mantle over all; and, as if this were not enough, modern innovators must needs add their quota of Vandalism. The most glaring deformity in this respect is the

choir, which occupies the centre of the edifice; and as it is not only conceived in the worst style of art, but is an outrage upon the uniformity of the general design, its presence comes to be regarded by the beholder as an intolerable intrusion in the place. In addition to this, Catholic superstition has lined the external walls with a host of minor chapels, enclosed within railings and gates; the effect of which is at once to contract the original dimensions of the edifice, and to militate against its architectural character.

The mosque was founded by Abderahman the First, in the year 786; and that monarch is said to have himself furnished the design. He intended it should excel in grandeur and magnificence the most famous in the East, and be comparable in all respects to that of the Alaksâ in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. Such was his enthusiastic ardour for its completion, that he daily laboured in its construction for an hour; but, notwithstanding his zeal, it was reserved for his son Hixem to conclude the work. If we are to believe the Arab chroniclers who record its wonders, the structure must have been a sight dazzling the vision, with its array of marble columns, its burnished gates and varied

ornaments. It was six hundred feet long, by two hundred and fifty wide, and was entered by nineteen spacious gates covered with bronze plates marvellously wrought; the chief gate was covered with plates of gold. The number of the columns was one thousand and ninety-three; and to light up this vast space for the prayer at night, four thousand seven hundred lamps were required, which annually consumed twenty-four thousand pounds of oil, and one hundred and twenty pounds' weight of aloes and amber for perfumes. The lamps of the mihrab, or secret oratory, were of gold, and of matchless workmanship and size.

On the northern side of the mosque lies the Patio de los Naranjos, similar in its arrangements to that of Seville, though much larger: on three sides it is surrounded by Moorish colonnades; and in the centre are fountains, mingled with cypresses and orange-trees, from whence the court takes its name. Here the faithful performed their ablutions ere entering the mosque; and at one corner rises the alminar, or tower, from whence the muezzin's voice summoned them to their devotions.

Quitting this relic of the Moslem conqueror, I wandered through the city, in the expectation of

finding other memorials of their sway, but was disappointed. The bridge over the Guadalquivir, though bearing traces of Moorish construction, is of Roman origin: the walls, however, studded throughout their whole circuit with square towers, are probably but little changed from the time when a Castilian host beleaguered the city, and shook them with its engines of war. Some of the towers are of large dimensions; and were, after the conquest of the city by the Christians, converted either into habitations or prisons. One of these, however, better preserved than the others, and of superior solidity, belongs to a later date than the Arab dominion; and, in reality, was built by a certain Christian hidalgo. It was erected at his expense as a punishment for having, in a moment of unfounded jealousy, murdered his wife. From this circumstance the tower was, and is, denominated "La Torre de la Mal-muerta;" that is, "the tower of the unjustly slain." Below the arch that unites it to the wall of the city, there was placed a tablet recording the name of the king who decreed this penalty, and those of the civic functionaries by whom it was carried into effect. However, in process of time the inscription became partially obli-

terated, though the tablet remains; and, as a mysterious interest attached itself to the structure, while the real cause of its foundation was forgotten, the popular voice wove for itself a legend respecting its origin, far more consonant to popular tastes and credulity than the matter-of-fact one I have related. The tower, it is said, was at one time the dwelling of a magician—Moorish, of course, who buried beneath its foundation the riches acquired by his compact with the evil one. It pleased him, moreover, to breathe over the spot a spell, which has the effect of concealing them from the eyes of the curious. The charm, however, shall be dissolved, when any one passing on horseback below the arch at full speed shall read the inscription, of which scarcely a vestige remains. He who shall do this is destined by the enchanter to inherit the treasure buried below.

Cordova, it must be owned, is a very dull place; the life has utterly departed from it, and to roam through its streets is like wandering among the tombs. If any one desires to know what a silent and desolate city is, let him come here; let him stray down a street, and see two or three figures at a distance vanishing round corners; let him cross a

plaza, and find himself quite alone though it be midday; let him go on listening to his foot-fall till the sound strikes painfully upon his hearing; let him do this for half an hour, and he will begin to think he is treading enchanted ground, and has stumbled upon that city mentioned in the Arabian Nights, the inhabitants of which were congealed to marble. Yet it was a living city once; the Corduba of imperial Rome was the flourishing and bustling emporium of a province; it was the birth-place of the two Senecas and Lucan. While literature thus ennobled the haunt of gain, and gave it a European reputation, the vestiges of Roman art, not yet obliterated by time, attest that its wealthy and luxurious inhabitants must have loved to beautify its streets with the best productions of architecture and sculpture. But the city unquestionably reached the zenith of its glory when, from being the centre of a provincial kingdom, it rose to be the metropolis of Spain under the Arabs. Under the Ommeyade dynasty, the founders of which combined with great administrative talents a love for literature and magnificence, there was united here the pomp and circumstance of an Oriental court with the graver attractions of schools,

universities, and libraries. At the same time, in the arts and manufactures of the time, and in many branches of science, her industrious citizens long enjoyed a superiority that drew upon them the wondering eyes of barbarous Christendom. Here came the tribute of fertile provinces, and the spoils wrested by her generals and alinanzors from the unsubdued mountaineers of Gallicia and the Asturias. Here also resorted the learned men of the East, to teach in her colleges, or to weave misty speculations in philosophy with her literati;* while in her

* It would appear from some notices to be gleaned from Arab historians, that the conversazione is far from being, as is generally supposed, the invention of modern society. Here is the picture of one so graphically drawn, that it is more than probable he who penned it must have been a member of the literary coterie he describes. Of Ahmed ben Said, a learned alfaqui or doctor of Toledo, it is related "that he was wont to assemble in his house about forty friends and literati belonging to that town and the vicinity. In the months of November, December, and January, they congregated in a spacious saloon, the floor of which was covered with silken and woollen carpets, with cushions of the same, while the walls were hung with tapestry and embroidered hangings; in the centre of the saloon stood a capacious stove, as high as a man, filled with burning charcoal, around which the party seated themselves at the distance each preferred. First was read the hisbe, or portion of the Coran, or some verses; these were made the subject of discussion: then were brought in perfumes of musk and other agreeable scents, and rose-water was sprinkled over them; lastly was served an abundant repast, consisting of kid and lamb's flesh, with divers other viands, dressed with oil, preparations of milk and butter,

bazaars and alcaicerías might be seen merchants and traders from remote countries, exchanging their products with the ingenious labours of her artisans. For more than two centuries did she thus stand without a rival among nations in the west, unsurpassed in civilisation, the useful arts, and scientific knowledge, until the Christians entered her gates, and precipitated her downfall, previously prepared by the dismemberment of the Moorish kingdom.

together with sweetmeats, fruits, and dates." — *Conde, Los Arabes en España*, Book i., chap 93.

This description not only makes us acquainted with the literary tastes of the Arabs, among whom philosophic conversation amounted almost to a passion, but unfolds a state of social intercourse for which we are little apt to give them credit. Who would expect to find, as is depicted in the foregoing sketch, an elegance displayed by these men of the tenth century at their entertainments, and a knowledge of comfort to which modern society can alone furnish a parallel? How striking, at the same time, is the contrast between their intellectual pursuits, their refined hospitality and sociable reunions, and the darkness and barbarism in which Western Europe was then plunged! England in particular suffers by the comparison. It was at this very period that Alfred the Great had risen to spread knowledge through his kingdom, and for that end had searched for, but could not find in all England north of the Trent, an individual capable of teaching Latin—the language, be it remembered, of the church. A little later, and the gross and savage habits of the population are illustrated by the fact, that their Danish invaders were counted exquisites because they combed their hair once a week! What a contrast does this deplorable state of learning, civilisation, and manners present, to the attainments of the enlightened and polished Arabs!

From that period she swiftly sunk into decay, but though her prosperity departed, she still lived to be torn by internal discord.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the city was the theatre of the sanguinary dissensions which prevailed between the houses of P^{er}ago and Comares, rival branches of the more illustrious house of Cordova. While the former faction maintained themselves in the upper part of the town, holding the alcazar as their citadel, the others were lords of the axerquia, or lower town, where they too erected their strongholds and defied their opponents. Amid the animosity of the contending parties, the city did not enjoy much repose. Whenever the retainers on either side met, desperate skirmishes were sure to stain the streets with blood; and it was not until Charles V. assumed the sceptre that these feuds were suppressed, and tranquillity restored. Henceforward the city existed only in name; the Inquisition set up its gloomy tribunal, and laid a paralysing hand upon the last remnants of her strength; it kindled the fires of persecution in the Corredera; and at the same time made its presence everywhere silently felt, so that the place sank into a lethargy which has endured to the present day.

Cordova, I repeat, is a very dull town, but in saying so perhaps I malign this shadow of departed greatness; for, in truth, I was detained here longer than I wished, and therefore may have viewed my place of durance with the jaundiced eye of a prisoner. I found myself immediately on my arrival a sufferer from illness, the consequence, I believe, of nocturnal travelling; and not the most agreeable feature of the case was, that I deemed it advisable to consult a doctor. As the complaint, though new to me, was not unfrequent in the country, I judged it might possibly have for its cure some one of those simple remedies with which most countries are supplied in reference to their peculiar maladies. The remedy, however, of my Sangrado was much more simple than I anticipated. He desired me to abstain from wine, which I seldom tasted; to imbibe cooling beverages, which I had been doing ever since the dog-days began; and there his prescription ended: in short, he acted as his countrymen generally do in affairs of the most urgent moment—did nothing, but talked a great deal. Truth, however, compels me to record, that humbly as we may estimate such conduct in general, it is the most desirable at the hands of a Spanish practitioner. In

fact, the state of medical ^{*}skill and science here is at a very low ebb, and has advanced little, if at all, since the days of Gil Blas. The authorities and dogmas venerated in his day are far from being disowned by the modern successors of Sangrado; and I really found, upon inspecting the libraries of two or three medical friends, that the volumes on their shelves were generally publications of the last century, with an occasional production of a later date. This treatment augurs badly for the patient who invokes their assistance; yet, whatever we may think, it satisfies the Andalucians, who are content to be killed in the same way that their forefathers were dispatched, and would, perhaps, rebel against a change for the better in the systems consecrated by time.

In my own case, I trusted that a few days' repose might prove the best medicine; nor was I disappointed. In the interim, however, time hung rather heavy on my hands. In the middle of the day it was, of course, impossible to move out, on account of the heat, but the mornings and evenings, especially the former, were delicious in the extreme; and at these hours I managed to creep about the town, though "with sober pace and

slow." Sometimes I wended my way to the Alameda, outside of the walls, and, seated on one of the stone benches, watched the day declining in the west. At these times—and, indeed, at whatever hour I strolled thither—I was usually the only intruder upon the solitude of the place: it seemed to be no favourite with the Cordovese. Occasionally an antiquated coach drawn by mules decorated with jingling bells, or a single horseman upon his sleek Cordovese steed, would pass by; but these were rare occurrences. How different from the gay Christina of Seville, where, from the first slanting rays of the sun till the close of dewy eve, a light-hearted throng is moving to and fro, and filling the air with the hum of their voices! Seville, however, though fallen likewise, and in old age, displays the spirit of the laughing philosopher amid the wreck of her greatness, and bears her misfortunes with a cheerful air: not so this ancient capital, upon whose sullen and morose aspect a smile never rests, and which, in whatever point you view it, seems to be perpetually brooding over its altered fate. More frequently my steps turned to the churches of the city, where are to be seen some of the best specimens of the Cordovese school of paint-

ing, with which I was desirous of making myself acquainted. After seeing the masterpieces of the Seville school, the beholder is not disposed to rank the works of the Cordovese artists very high: those of Antonio Castillo are the most numerous, and of this painter it is said that he died of chagrin on seeing the superiority of Murillo, with whom he was a fellow-pupil under the same master. Of the other painters of this school there are many good specimens to be found in the various chapels in the cathedral, particularly of the works of Cespedes and Palomino.

It was a consequence I little expected of my picture-hunting expeditions to the Cordovese churches, that I was speedily besieged with solicitations to become a purchaser of paintings, which the possessors were very willing to dispose of; they had heard I was "*muy aficionado a la pintura*," and at once jumped to the conclusion that I must be a collector. The latter supposition was altogether groundless; but how they were so well acquainted with the object of my visits to their churches, is no mystery to those who have lived any length of time in the country. The truth is, a vast deal of quiet espionage is exercised by the population of a Spanish

town. *Little is the stranger who saunters through* one aware that he is the observed of many observers, the majority of whom are invisible to his own eyes; his movements are scanned from concealed loopholes; his appearance, dress, and most trifling actions, noted with wondrous particularity: and when the evening reunions take place, all these facts are duly thrown into the common stock of information. From this results an amount of acquaintance with his sayings and doings which will startle him by its minuteness and accuracy, should it ever come to his knowledge. As regards myself, I had frequent occasion to be surprised, by being reminded of circumstances which I imagined had passed without notice. Among other instances, I remember being informed by an inhabitant of a village some fifty miles from Seville, that it was my habit to walk up and down under the arcos in the Plaza San Francisco of the latter city. In rainy weather I usually did so, on account of the shelter afforded by the arcade; but this trivial circumstance, which anywhere else no one would take the trouble to remark, had attracted the attention of the neighbours, by one of whom it had been considered of

such moment as to be worthy of a passage in a letter to his friend in the said village.

All this surveillance might be borne with sufficient equanimity, were it not sometimes the origin of serious annoyance. In this country it so happens, that if one does anything at variance with received opinions, it is at the risk of becoming an object of suspicion. This the traveller will speedily discover, for as the Spaniards are no travellers themselves, they cannot understand why an individual should encounter the hardships of a journey for the mere purpose of gratifying a laudable curiosity: no, no; he must have some other purpose at heart, and, of course, a sinister one. Accordingly, if he explores the ruins of some ancient fortress, it is to search for hidden treasure; if he visits a mine, it is to purchase it over the heads of the lessees; if he is seen climbing a hill in order to enjoy a fine view from the summit, it is to spy out the nakedness of the land, and indulge a malicious curiosity. And woe to him if he be detected with a notebook, scribbling notes, or taking a sketch of the surrounding landscape. This is quite enough to throw half a province into a fever of disquietude, to disturb the night's rest of

the *alcaldes* or *corregidores* wherever he goes, and to send a host of spies, male and female, to dog his heels with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause.

But to return to the Cordovese picture-dealers, whom no protestations would convince that I never had the remotest intention of purchasing their wares,—so much more difficult is it to get rid of a reputation than to acquire it. One day I received a pressing invitation from an inhabitant to view a picture in his possession of no ordinary merit. As the message ran—I might or might not purchase it, but at all events the favour of my company to behold this *chef-d'œuvre* was particularly requested. I went, and was admitted by an elderly female—as it subsequently appeared, the sister of the proprietor; and of whom, *en passant*, I may remark, that her hair was worn, as is invariably the custom of Spanish elderly ladies, without any attempt to conceal the snow with which the winter of life besprinkles it. The painting was, to my surprise, something above the common run. It was, if I mistake not, the production of Antonio Castillo, and represented a monk bending in prayer over a corpse that lay at his feet: the subject was solemn and saddening, and lost none of its gloomy effect from being clothed in

the sombre colouring of that master. To judge, however, from the price affixed by the possessor, its worth was extravagantly overrated; and this error, which arose from ignorance more than from any other cause, is one that has now become very prevalent in Spain in regard to the value of paintings. Whatever might have been the fact in former times, when valuable works of art were, from the ignorance of the owners, obtained at sums far below their real worth, it is not so now; on the contrary, the tendency is to run into the opposite extreme, and, with equal want of knowledge, to demand for third and fourth-rate productions such prices as show that the possessor, in framing an estimate of their merits, has consulted his imagination more than any other standard. My curiosity satisfied, I departed. I had, however, proceeded only a few paces from the door, when I heard myself called back by the peculiar "Hist," with which Spanish lips are familiar: turning round, I beheld the old lady of the house beckoning to me with an air of much mystery. With some surprise, I approached, and followed her into a small apartment, the door of which, after having looked about the "patio" lest any one might be within ear-shot, she cautiously closed. In

silent wonder I had accompanied her into the room, but when she closed and bolted the door, as if under great apprehensions for her own safety, I prepared myself to hear some dreadful secret.

“ Senor,” she whispered, “ will you do me a favour?”

Had the speaker been young and fair, I should doubtless have given utterance to some rash vow, and promised compliance with her unknown behests; but wrinkles and grizzled locks are antidotes to sentiment, so, with the caution of my countrymen, I answered her question by putting another, and requested to know what the favour was.

“ I am told that in England you have a liquid for dying the hair black: could you procure me some?”

It was too bad to be wound up to the highest pitch of suspense for so absurd a *denouement* as this, and at first I could not help feeling rather angry at the old lady. However, I informed her that there were such things in England, but at the same time assured her that they were of a highly deleterious nature; that if unskilfully applied, they had the effect of colouring the hair sometimes purple or green; and, in short, painted their dangers in such a style, that she crossed herself as she reflected on

her rash wish to use them; and at our parting, which was as cautiously conducted as that of a couple of conspirators, I left her effectually cured of her desire to be juvenile.

Of the few houses at which I was a visitor, that of the Capitan-General of the province was not the least agreeable. He himself, an officer who had grown grey in the service of his country, was well entitled to his present high rank, both from the length of his services, and from his wounds and sufferings in the South American campaigns, where he had honourably distinguished himself. Such claims, however, are little regarded amid the incessant changes of ministry which occur in Spain; and I fear, therefore, that he, like many other trustworthy servants of their country, has been displaced to furnish a post for some needy and unscrupulous partisan of the dominant faction.

On mentioning to him, one day, that I was about to visit the quicksilver mines of Almaden, he dissuaded me from journeying thither alone, as the road was in many parts unsafe for solitary travellers, particularly as it approached the borders of La Mancha. This province was not yet cleared of the "facciosos," and straggling bands calling them-

selves Carlists, but who in reality were brigands, that, like Harry Wynd, fought solely for their own hand: these sometimes descended so far south as to hang about the skirts of the Sierra Morena, and infest the route I purposed taking. In a day or two, however, a detachment of cavalry was to leave for Almaden, and would be assigned to me as an escort, should I choose to wait for its departure.

Before daybreak, then, one morning, I found myself in the midst of a dozen lancers, moving through the dark and silent streets of Cordova towards the gate which opened upon our intended route. At that early hour it was surrounded by country people and their donkeys laden with produce, waiting with exemplary patience until the panniers had been searched by the custom-house officers—for such is the system pursued here, upon arriving at the gates of a walled town. On these occasions the traveller will behold an official rush out from some den in the vicinity and demand the keys of his trunks, the contents of which are forthwith displayed to the light of day. This manœuvre is supposed to be a check to smuggling; the rulers of the country imagining, in the simplicity of their hearts, that there is no other entrance

into a city except by the legitimate means of access.

Vaya! a Spanish contrabandista will find you out as many modes of ingress as there are streets within it.

Half an hour's ride brought us to the sierras, which we began to climb as the first streak of day appeared in the east; from the summit of the first ridge a glorious prospect burst upon the view, in tracing back the road we had traversed. In the clear light of the morning sun, objects revealed themselves in the greatest distinctness, and distances appeared to be shortened; the city shook off for the time its aspect of hoar antiquity, as it seemed to feel the enlivening influence of the hour; we could see along the plain further than usual, and at the furthest limits of the immense expanse could distinctly discern how its boundary chain of mountains wound round it—how the uneven line of their summits was sometimes broken by gaps; and could mark the existence of forests by the dark spots that covered their sides. It is only at such an hour that the eye is enabled to pierce far into space; the atmosphere is then as unclouded to the eye as it is fresh and exhilarating to the senses. Later in the day, when the moisture is drawn up from the soil by the heat of the sun, a hazy vapour clothes the landscape; and its features

then appear to the beholder as if a veil of gauze were flung over them, beneath which lesser objects disappear to the vision, while the salient points are revealed in misty indistinctness.

From that hour until the termination of the day's march our progress was a series of "ups and downs," among a succession of low ridges, varied by our passing through a solitary pine-wood, and an occasional scramble along the dry bed of a torrent. Everywhere the surface was destitute of cultivation, the wild lavender and cistus contending for possession of the soil; and with the exception of a solitary venta, we descried no habitation in this inhospitable waste before we came to a halt for the day at Villaharta. Unpromising enough this miserable collection of hovels appeared, as regarded its powers of entertainment for a wayfarer; but my fears on that score were agreeably dissipated when I was conducted to a clean looking cottage, which I was told to consider as my lodging for the night. All this was the consequence of a certain missive delivered to me by the alcalde, wherein the mistress of the house was commanded to furnish me with house-room; in short, I received my billet like the rest of the soldiers: and when I contrasted the perfections of my apartment, humble as it was,

with the accomodations of the posada, the lower story of which was littered ankle-deep with filth, I found myself drawing conclusions much to the advantage of a soldier's lot as compared with that of a gentleman traveller.

In the evening I was honoured with a visit from the secretary of the ayuntamiento, who called to proffer to the English stranger all the civilities in his power, and at the same time to extract from that personage his motives and purpose in travelling through the district. I fairly staggered him by telling the simple truth, that I was travelling for pleasure and information. The village scrivener, with the eunning air of a man who knew the world and its ways better, and could read the heart of man, quietly shook his head at this. It was impossible! why, the alcalde and he had never done such a thing in their lives; nobody ever travelled for pleasure. "No, no," he concluded, "usted tendrá algun otro objeto." (You must have some other object.) This difference of opinion, however, did not prevent us from strolling out together beyond the outskirts of the village, and wandering among groves of evergreen oak and fields of eorn, while he pointed out, with no small pride, some of the natural wonders of his native place. We serambled

down a steep bank to a mineral spring, the waters of which he assured me were of unrivalled efficacy in all manner of complaints. Be that as it may, they were acidulated and sparkling, and by no means unpleasant to the taste, and elsewhere would probably have conjured up a spa in their vicinity. Then I was led to inspect a shapeless mass of bricks, and called upon to declare what that might be. I confessed my ignorance, and was informed that these were the remains of a furnace which he himself had caused to be constructed, in order to smelt some iron ore, of which there was abundance in the neighbourhood: the heat, however, had demolished the bricks, in place of reducing the ore to metal, and so the attempt proved unsuccessful. It was true that bricks of fire-clay, just the kind he wanted, were made in England, but then the duty imposed upon them by his government amounted almost to a prohibition; and none were of course to be procured in his own country: in consequence he was compelled to give up the attempt. In conversing with this village authority, I could not fail to be struck with his propensity to indulge in fine sounding expressions and *sesquipedalia verba*—a very

common predilection among half-educated people. Perhaps in this he was not so much to blame, for the tendency of modern Spanish authors is to forsake the "pure well undefiled" of their forefathers' Castilian, and to adopt the style of diction I heard rolling from his lips—long sonorous words, almost exclusively of Latin derivation, and from that circumstance easily comprehended by a stranger. Let the latter, however, beware of supposing, that if perfect in this latinized Spanish, he is a master of the language. On turning to the pages of Cervantes or Quevedo, he will speedily perceive his mistake, and discover before him a *terra incognita*, abounding in words and idiomatic phrases, which seem to belong to another tongue. Hence results the extreme copiousness of the language—its chief difficulty to a learner—and the fluency of speech that characterizes most Spaniards: a well informed native is at no loss to clothe the same idea in a dozen different shapes, and there are few things which cannot be expressed by two or three terms.

My couch was a thin mattress spread upon a huge chest, about six feet long by three broad—the

depot, I imagined, of the family wardrobe, and the sole piece of furniture in the chamber I occupied. I slept soundly, however, and before daybreak was on the march, along with my fellow-horsemen. The nature of this day's journey was almost an exact counterpart of yesterday's. It carried us across round-backed ridges, divided from each other by deep vales, down which led rugged and dangerous descents: before noon, however, we reached the capital of the district, Pozoblanco, a large village substantially built of stone. Here the route of my escort terminated, and I parted from them with regret. I knew, however, that the comandante was instructed to supply their places with others; and on presenting to him my letter of introduction, he received me very cordially, and promised to send on another party with me; at the same time it was agreed, in order to reach Santa Eufemia by night-fall, that I should be in readiness to start at four o'clock. At that hour my promised escort rode up, and I was agreeably surprised to see it consist of my companions of the morning: they had received orders to accompany me further; and as they were my comrades during a march of a hundred miles, I shall here describe them.

“Their capo, or head, was a sargento mayor, by name Manuel Dias, a smart young fellow of prepossessing appearance. Manuel was far superior in many respects to the generality of non-commissioned officers in our own service. That, like them, he understood his duties, I could well believe, for he had risen from the ranks, having originally served in the infantry, and obtained his promotion to the cavalry as a reward for the intelligence and good conduct he displayed in the former service. At the same time his manners were characterised by the grave politeness and scrupulous adherence to courteous phraseology which marks the genuine son of Spain; his language was polished, and frequently surprised me by its elegance: indeed, I rather imagine he had made it his study to express himself in choice phrases, for I had met few of his superiors either in birth or rank who surpassed him upon this point. Besides this, he could touch with the hand of a proficient his country's national instrument, the guitar; could accompany it with an Andalucian or Gitano ditty, if need be; and so, taking all these things into consideration, and moreover seeing that he was the possessor of a pair of sparkling black eyes, I doubted not he was somewhat of a favourite with the fair sex.

With regard to the others, my impressions were less favourable; their bearing was anything but military, and especially wanted that upright carriage which everywhere distinguishes the soldier. That they were less trim as respects the outward man than they might have been, was possibly less their fault than that of the authorities; for, while their uniform ought to have been white trowsers, green jackets faced with red, and chakos to match, some two or three sported their winter pantaloons of light blue; and altogether their garments bore the signs of two or three years' hard service. This arose from the faulty arrangements of the government, or more probably from the poverty of its exchequer; so that between these two causes it usually happened, as I was told by the men, that their summer clothing was served out to them about the end of autumn, and that of winter some time about the beginning of summer—*cosas de España!* Their pay was what we should consider very little, and, after deductions, left only about three farthings per diem at their own disposal; out of this, moreover, they had to provide needles and thread, and other trifling necessities for upholding their well-worn habiliments—which, by the way, displayed more gaping

wounds than was seemly to the eye; *au reste*, they were a merry, light-hearted set, always enlivening the road with a song or jest, and the best of companions on a dreary journey.

In the vicinity of Pozoblanco the soil was carefully cultivated, and divided into fields by stone walls. Among these we pursued our way to Torremilan, apparently a very ancient village; and two hours further of a moonlight ride brought us to Santa Eufemia, our halting-place for the night. This also, like the other villages we passed, bore the marks of great antiquity, and was besides surrounded by a crumbling wall, which perhaps had been raised by Moorish hands.

While waiting for my billet in the midst of the escort, I could not help remarking that the elegant diversion termed "chaffing" was not peculiar to the regions of Cockayne. My escort freely indulged in that species of wit at the expense of the inhabitants, whom our arrival had brought out of their houses, and who now surrounded us, surveying in silence our appearance and movements.

"Ola! tio," cried one to an aged villager, "do many ships arrive at this great seaport of yours?" "And, old fellow," said another, "what's the price of cod-

fish here?" "Ten cuidado," cried a third to a barefooted damsel tripping past; "take care and don't damage your shoes." These and similar witticisms were received with abundant laughter by the troopers; but what reply they met with from the parties victimised, may be easily imagined by those acquainted with the slang vocabulary of Spain, and its richness in expletives neither decorous nor flattering.

Next morning we were, as usual, astir at an early hour, and looking up, as we left the town, at its ancient castle, which occupies the rocky summit of an insulated peak apart from the town. Gray and wind-beaten as it appeared, it was still in a habitable, if not defensible state, and was once, I believe, occupied by the Carlists during the war. From this circumstance the reader will be apprised that we had now entered a "debateable land," wherein the Constitutional Queen and her dreaded enemies had come to blows. The storm, however, had long blown over, but still anything but a settled calm rested upon the place of contention. I was not surprised, therefore, to see our gallant cabo display more of the precautions of war than he had hitherto deemed necessary, and send on a couple of men in front to act as an advanced guard. Seeing

this manœuvre, which suggested the possibility of a skirmish, in which, of course, every one shifts for himself, I surveyed my own means of defence, and regretted to find they were incapable of sustaining a well-planned attack. Pocket pistols I carried, it is true, but they were toys rather than deadly implements; my only resource was a geological hammer, which, though not equal to the weapon of Thor, I trusted would be sufficiently tough to "knock off a specimen" from the heads of those rebellious subjects of her Majesty of Spain who might come within its swing.

About a league from Santa Eufemia, after crossing a shallow stream, whose waters a long way to the westward mingle with those of the Guadiana, the country assumed a more level appearance: here, for the first time on our journey, the semblance of a decent road was observable. I need scarcely remind the reader, that hitherto our road had been one of the rugged bridle-paths of the sierras, upon which any pace beyond a slow walk was utterly impracticable: now it enabled us to push on with quicker steps, and led along the banks of a sluggish stream, which at one point appeared to have forced a passage for itself through a wall of rock that

crossed its channel. From this point Almaden came into view, situated on the summit of a ridge, in the centre of others that rose to a considerable height; and before noon I was established in its wretched inn, stretched on a mattress, and suffering from a return of the malady by which I had been attacked in Cordova. As a matter of little importance to the reader, I shall pass over in silence the hours I lay in a deplorable state of exhaustion; I should be sorry, however, that the unremitting kindness of the hostess passed without record: it was she who attended me with as much watchful care as if I had been a near relative; and when it occurred to me that tea might prove a restorative, she caused the whole town to be ransacked for that article, and on the search being fruitless, by a happy thought applied to the apothecary, among whose stores half an' ounce was at length discovered. This produced a reddish infusion, which resembled tea as much as Monmouth does Macedon, and suggested many doubts as to the genuineness of the apothecary's stock in trade in other medicines as well as this. However, whether it was owing to this or the few hours' repose I know not, but at nightfall

I found myself sufficiently recovered to sally forth and inspect the town.

Upon passing by the fortifications in the forenoon, I had been struck by the rudeness of their construction, although apparently the work of no distant date; and I now learnt that these were the defences hastily thrown up by Flinter, to repel the Carlist force under Gomez. The breaches effected on that occasion still remained unrepaired, and were probably allowed to continue in that state, as from the commanding position of the surrounding heights the place was altogether indefensible, and walls would afford no protection to its buildings. Flinter, however, made a gallant defence, and only capitulated in order to save the town the horrors of an assault, which he foresaw was inevitable, and, from the weakness of the garrison, too certain to prove successful. This was not the first time I had become acquainted with the name of Flinter; and all I heard in connexion with it had inclined me to take more than an ordinary interest in the fortunes and fate of that daring adventurer. An Irishman, I believe, by birth, he had served the cause of Spain in Mexico with distinguished gallantry; and on the

breaking out of the Carlist war, joined the ranks of the Constitutional army. On the soil of Spain he added to his well-earned reputation by his defence of this town, on the occasion of the "raid of Gomez" through Andalucia, notwithstanding that he and his garrison were finally compelled to surrender to superior numbers. As a prisoner, his rank did not exempt him from the hardships and cruelties under which the majority of his followers sank. I had conversed with those in Cazalla and Constantina who had witnessed the undaunted bearing with which he met them; they had seen him marching on foot, divested of every article of clothing but a tattered cloak, yet preserving his characteristic cheerfulness amid these indignities and the perils of his position. Dangerous, indeed, it was, for to become incapable of keeping pace with the Carlist force was tantamount to certain death; the unfortunate wretch whose strength failed him, and lagged behind, was shot without compunction. In this way perished many prisoners, chiefly young men dragged from their homes on account of the principles they espoused, and from the nature of their pursuits unfit for the fatigues of the long marches by which Gomez traversed Andalucia.

Flinter, however, survived these horrors, and subsequently succeeded in effecting his escape from a Carlist prison. As a reward for his services, the province of La Mancha, in which Almaden is situated, was placed under his command, but with means at his disposal so imperfect as to seem almost a mockery of authority. This, however, did not damp his energies; with six hundred men—all he could collect—he made a rapid night march; surprised and utterly routed the forces of one of the Carlist leaders—if I mistake not, those of Basilio—though triple his own in numerical amount; and for a time the province was cleared of its enemies. These successes were, however, received with no good-will by the government of the day. Impediments were accordingly thrown in his way; his plans thwarted; supplies denied; till at length his pride was wounded, and having thrown up his command, he repaired to the court to state his wrongs and obtain redress. Here fresh mortifications awaited him; and no longer able to endure them, in a moment of excitement he terminated his existence.

Brave and talented as Flinter was, it is not to be denied that he possessed faults which may have militated against his prospects. The most con-

spicuous was a propensity to self-laudation—a venial sin, one would think, in Spain, where nothing is so common; but which, nevertheless, must have aroused more hostility to himself and his measures, than the most scandalous abuse of his high authority. Tolerant as Spaniards are of gasconade among their countrymen, they resent as a dire offence the same failing in others: for a stranger to boast of his deeds of daring, is to administer to themselves a rebuke which stirs up the worst feelings of their nature, because it points to their own do-nothing style of performances, and forces disagreeable comparisons upon their thoughts. Hence the man who is in the habit of doing this, becomes a thorn in the side of their pride and vanity; and while these, the strongest passions of the nation, are wounded, his past services and real worth are cast out of sight. Nothing, therefore, could have been more imprudent in Flinter than to publish, on the occasion of his resigning his command, the following statement, which at once paints the character of the man, and explains the cause of his subsequent treatment from the government he served :—“To-morrow I repair to Court, since Her Majesty has accepted my resigna-

tion. I have saved these mines (Almaden) and eight millions of reals in quicksilver, which I despatched to Seville; and I leave behind me fortified an impregnable position. Thanks to God, I quit La Mancha with honour, and without having sanctioned or enforced a single exaction from any town. These are the acts, these are the sentiments of Flinter: let the country and the government judge."

A wiser man than Flinter would have spoken "with bated breath and whispered humbleness" of these achievements, which certainly were far from common at the period he wrote: a more astute mind would have concealed its part in them, and in flaming language assigned the credit to the patriotism, the zeal, the heroic exertions—in a word, to the lofty virtues, of which the government was as devoid as its treasury was of funds; and the reward might have been a pardon for past successes, his continuance in his post, and perhaps some modicum of assistance lent him. In no other way could he have obtained from the administration that favour which honour, duty, and interest, equally commanded them to show to a faithful, worthy, and able subordinate. Such are the ways of Spain!

In the western side of the town, and at the foot of the ridge on which it is situated, is the entrance to the mine. The sargento bore me company as I descended to the gateway, and was as impatient as myself to gratify a laudable curiosity; but for the time it was doomed to be disappointed. No one was permitted to enter without an order from the mining authorities; and that, after some trouble, was obtained, but with the intimation that for that day I was too late, and must present myself the following morning at six, when a sub-director would be in attendance to conduct me through the interior. While this important matter was being arranged, I had ample leisure to note how dire were the effects of the mercurial vapour upon those who laboured in the mine. There was not a man that passed me who did not more or less bear the marks of its noxious influence. All were characterised by a death-like pallor, from which the youngest and most robust were not exempt. The aspect of these, from the conjunction of their muscular and rounded limbs with the countenances of spectres, was singularly strange. There were others, however, into whom the subtle poison had entered deeper: some were partially paralytic, and walked with a

tottering gait; many were affected with a constant tremor, which was distinctly perceptible; and others again had lost either their teeth or an eye, and one or two an arm.

The most striking phenomenon, however, was the change wrought upon the eyes of all. The dark, speaking eye of Spain was no longer to be seen, but in its place you beheld a lack-lustre orb, coloured of a bluish tinge, and giving to its owner the blank stare of idiotcy. This, however, was only the expression of their countenances when at rest, for they are by no means deficient in intelligence, as I found on engaging in conversation with some of them. These men seldom work longer than six hours at a time in the mine; and a few, who study their health, pass only every other day below; yet the utmost care cannot prevent the searching vapour from penetrating the system, and producing the pitiable effects I witnessed. The wages of the miners average twenty-pence a-day; and, inconsiderable as we should reckon this as a recompense for the certain loss of health the labour entails, employment is nevertheless eagerly embraced by the townspeople and those of the neighbourhood. It must be remembered, however, that these are high wages in

Andalucía, where the gains of a labourer seldom exceed a shilling a-day.

As usually happens when men are engaged in a hazardous calling, no one thinks of the morrow, or of realising from his savings a provision which may release him, ere it be too late, from his connexion with the mine. The principle of a short life and a merry one is the rule of conduct here, and every peseta is in consequence dissipated as fast as it is acquired. There are few who do not, according to the notions of the country, fare sumptuously every day. While the jornalero of the soil is satisfied with his frugal repasts of gaspachos, garlic, bread, and melon, his fellow-labourer in the bowels of the earth indulges in dainties and luxuries, such as fowl and flesh, generous wine, lemonade, and so forth. The one, however, lives to a good old age; but the other consumes a few years in thus struggling against his fate, and finally dies young, or lingers on broken in constitution and prematurely decayed.

The following morning, the first object of interest I viewed was the apparatus for extracting the mercury from the rough ore. This consists of a range of furnaces, in which the ore is exposed to the action of fire; and in connexion with these are certain tubes

through which the vapour from the mineral passes into chambers, where it condenses, and assumes the shape of quicksilver. A reservoir, fashioned out of stone, is attached to each chamber, to receive the liquid as it trickles from the walls, or rolls in globules on the floor. This is the ancient method of obtaining the mercury. The more modern differs from it, in the vapour being conducted through pipes of burnt clay, whose purpose is similar to that of the worm in distillation, for the vapour is condensed as it passes through them, and deposits the quicksilver in the reservoirs without going through an intermediate chamber. Here, as in other parts of Andalusia, the scarcity of fuel must be a great bar to the operations of calcining and smelting; no other material is to be procured but brushwood, which, besides being incapable of a steady heat, must be brought from a considerable distance, and is, in consequence, both scarce and expensive. As soon as the quicksilver is formed, it is collected from the reservoirs and placed in the general dépôt, in large troughs hollowed out of stone; from hence it is dispatched in iron jars to Seville, there to be exported to various parts of the world.

Entering the mine by a doorway, over which was

placed an image of the Virgin, we passed into a long gallery, at the termination of which the descent commenced. It was by no means perilous, though somewhat fatiguing, and was effected by a series of ladders, furnished with landing-places at short distances; one or two galleries we traversed, again descended some dozens of ladders, and at length reached the lowest deeps, where the miners were at work. The depth we had now reached was said to be 900 feet from the surface, and I am inclined to consider this statement as not very wide from the truth, from calculating the numbers and height of the ladders by which we descended. The scene into which we penetrated differed little from those that usually occur in the interior of mines. Men were employed, by the light of feeble lamps, in various processes; some were hammering, others driving bores, working pumps, or conveying the mineral to the bottom of the shaft, from whence it is drawn up to the surface in buckets. The vein of cinnabar upon which they were engaged appeared to be peculiarly rich; from every crevice beads of pure mercury might be seen exuding, and on breaking a fragment, it was found to be studded with minute globules, which were disseminated through the

mass, and testified how the larger drops were formed.

This mine is, perhaps, the most ancient of which we have record. Theophrastus, who lived 300 years before Christ, speaks of the cinnabar of Spain; and Vitruvius, a cotemporary of Augustus, makes similar mention of it. Pliny describes it as being situated in the province of Bœtica, as in truth it is, though, in the modern division of Spain, Almaden is the last village of La Mancha, and is only separated from the province of Cordova by a rivulet. By the Romans free use was made of the cinnabar, although they considered the mercury to be poisonous. The Roman matrons employed it to rouge their cheeks, while to their painters it was no less useful in furnishing vermilion. Pliny moreover informs us that the mine was closed, and sealed up with the greatest care, and opened only to allow a certain quantity to be extracted. During the dominion of the Moors little is known of its history, and it is probable that the state of manufactures and commerce in Europe for many ages subsequent to their expulsion would prevent it from being an object of interest; but in the year 1525 the demand for its produce appears to have been very considerable. In

that year the two brothers, Marcos and Cristoval Fuggars, rented the mine, under an obligation to extract annually 4000 quintals, which were to be purchased by the government at prices varying according to circumstances. This contract continued in force with these lessees, or their descendants, until 1645, when they abandoned both it and one by which they held the silver mine of Guadalcanal.* At present the produce exceeds 20,000 quintals, and the revenue yielded thereby averages about 300,000*l.* per annum.

A wearisome ascent it was to the light of day, and many were the pauses and halts demanded by our conductor the sub-director, whose laborious efforts in climbing, for which a short and rotund frame were far from favourable, I could not help regarding with a malicious satisfaction. The truth

* The brothers Fuggars were the Rothschilds of their day; and, in truth, there is a singular resemblance in their career to that of the colossal capitalists of modern times. They were natives of Germany, as was the father of the present Rothschilds; were the bankers and money-lenders to the chief monarchs of Europe; and were also, as the others now are, the lessees of Almaden. From these sources they accumulated such vast wealth, that their name became synonymous with riches; and perhaps few are aware that the phrase, "A rich old *fogo*," takes its rise from these millionnaires of a former age. Their descendants, I believe, still exist in Germany, having risen, through their wealth, to the rank of nobles.

is, that the worthy sub-director was somewhat of the opinion of the village escribano in Villaharta, and could only see in my visit to the mines some ulterior purpose, which it was his duty to detect, and if possible defeat. I could not, therefore, stir without finding him close as a shadow behind me—nor address a miner without his ear being directed to catch both question and reply—nor chip off a fragment of cinnabar without his looking grave, and fancying some mysterious consequences were to follow my inspection of the mineral. All this was sufficiently provoking, and in some measure a bar to a satisfactory survey of the mine; but it was the unavoidable effect of departing from the beaten track in Spain, which no one, and especially no foreigner, can ever expect to do without subjecting himself to the most groundless suspicions.

The following hour I was on my way back to Pozoblanco, which I reached “sin novedad” that afternoon; after a few hours’ rest I proceeded with a change of escort to Villaharta, where we arrived late in the night. My lancer comrades remained behind in Pozoblanco, and, as I quitted the town, I beheld the whole party in a wine-shop enjoying themselves soldier-fashion, and rejoicing over the

few dollars I distributed among them. Poor fellows! such an event as the possession of silver was a rarity in their military career, and deserved commemoration in bumpers; for their pay was six months in arrear, and was doled out, though a mere trifle, at distant intervals and in small sums. As regarded the sargento, I felt some delicacy in treating him as I did the men. His manners and deportment had all along exhibited so much of the gentleman, and his sentiments and language were so far above the station he occupied, that I could not help regarding him as in reality belonging to a class to which money could scarcely be offered without affront. I hesitated, therefore, about placing it in his hands. I fancy, however, that the trooper who acted as my servant perceived these scruples; for, without waiting to be questioned, he began to narrate how the sargento and a party had one time escorted the Archbishop of Cordova, and how the said archbishop at parting presented him with his blessing and ten dollars, and how he thanked the archbishop "mucho, mucho," for the "gratification." This was enough; and I duly followed the archbishop's example, save in the matter of the blessing; and the worthy sergeant went on his way

rejoicing. With this worthy personage I had only one fault to find. In place of the plain "usted" by which every one in Spain is addressed, from the hidalgo down to the beggar, he deemed it befitting some exalted notions of my dignity to dub me "usia," a term corresponding to "your lordship" in England. With most people the mistake, I imagine, would be grateful to their feelings rather than otherwise; but on the present occasion, when I contrasted the outward show of the individual so addressed with the grandeur of his title, I felt inclined to tax the sargento with indulging in a piece of quiet satire at his expense. The fact was, that for a peer my turn-out was humble, if not shabby to the last degree; sombrero, jacket, and crimson worsted sash, were of the most plebeian fabric and cut, and bore unequivocal traces of plebeian hardships; his lordship's steed, moreover, was a wretched hack—the best it is true, that could be procured in Cordova, but nevertheless so sorry a specimen of horseflesh as to be christened by the troopers "El Torero," or the bull-fighter, in allusion to the animals that appear in the bull-ring, and which are invariably the refuse of their kind. The sargento, however, on his part, seemed quite un-

conscious of the absurd effect of the title under such circumstances, and from first to last bated me not an inch of the scrupulous punctilio with which he used it.

His successor in command of the fresh party, though ranking higher, was in other respects far his inferior. He was an alferéz, or cornet—a junior in military honours, though a man of fifty summers: as far as I could discern, his only accomplishments were to grumble at everything and swear like a trooper. For the sun he entertained an especial aversion, and to accommodate him our marches were made by night. No sooner did the first beams of day overtake us, than he drew forth a red cotton handkerchief, in the folds of which he carefully concealed his visage. The effect of this, surmounted by a military casque, was, it may be conceived, more singular than warlike, and was a perpetual source of irritation to one's risible faculties. On the first night's march I was awakened, while dozing in the saddle, by our halting at a venta, the sole habitation in a forsaken land of many leagues in extent. Without delay the men proceeded to throw themselves from their horses, when "Hold!" cried our doughty leader; "there may be robbers in the venta, and I have known

such rush out and escape, owing to the men being dismounted and unable to pursue." In obedience therefore to his orders, some remounted their horses, while the others with drawn sabres surrounded the door, looking like terriers watching the opening of a rat-trap. At length, after a long and loud summons, the door slowly turned on its hinges, and disclosed—not desperate brigands, but the meagre form of the host, clad in a solitary garment of the shortest, and holding aloft a lamp in his hand. Further observations it was out of my power to make, for, in his affright at beholding the gleaming steel and the attitudes of the men ready to strike, the lamp slipped from his fingers, and darkness enveloped the scene and the *dramatis personæ*.

Without further incident I reached Cordova, and on the following day was on the high road to Anduxar. A parting visit was, however, due to the mosque, and for the last time I wandered among its thousand pillars in still unabated wonder of the strange scene they formed. To the last, one could not help connecting some supernatural origin with this wondrous memorial of a departed race, for in its every feature there were traces of the East—that land of dark enchantments. Sometimes it was as if

I strayed in the midst of a petrified forest, whose branches, while young, had been bent by magic hands into interlacing arches and fantastic curves to intercept the light of day; or sometimes I fancied myself in one of the sacred groves of idolatry, suddenly turned into stone by the fiat of Omnipotence in order to confound its unhallowed worshippers. Everything, in truth, bespoke the place to be the holy ground of another and not a Christian people. The Crescent was everywhere engraven on its walls, and that too deeply to be effaced, even by a conqueror's hand. Despite of the vicissitudes and the lapse of ages, it was fresh to the eye in the illuminated wall, the slender shaft, the quaint arch, and the Oriental cast of which every object partook; these symbols seemed still at war with the Cross, notwithstanding the long domination of the latter in the place.

If it were allowable to test the quality of men's religious sentiments by their places of devotion, the result would, I think, be unfavourable to the Arab builders of this temple. None bore the banner of the false prophet so far and so proudly, and none developed so highly the intellect of their race; but here, while the wish to honour their faith was

abundantly manifest, they had utterly failed to give expression to a high devotional feeling. In this, the mightiest work of their hands, there were no traces of the soaring aspirations which other creeds have wrought into their sacred edifices; vastness and grandeur are wanting here; you wander through the pile astonished and bewildered, but unawed; and you leave it uninfluenced by those elevating impressions which descend even upon the believer in another faith when he visits the mighty temples of a strange people.

In other respects this mosque might be considered an image of the Arab mind. That it was subtle and ingenious, you gather in following with the eye the unending intricacies of decoration that overspread the interior, and which nevertheless betray, through their seemingly careless irregularity, a studied system of complicated arrangement. That it was painstaking and laborious, is testified by the perplexing minuteness of detail pervading every design their fancy sketched. That it was musing and speculative you cannot doubt, after having stood awhile in the twilight gloom of the building, amid its pale host of columns: after a time the whole seems to fade before the eyes into a troubled dream, peopled with

shadowy forms, whose silence and rigidity are at once a mystery and occupation to the thoughts. And, moreover, that it was ostentatious and magnificent, is proved by the hewn and shapen marble everywhere lavished, and the gold and bright colours that glitter upon wall and ceiling.

Such qualities, it is manifest, do not constitute a mind of a high order—it is deficient in boldness and grasp of thought; and this, in truth, was the characteristic of the Arab intellect. Perhaps a loftier flight was denied it by the genius of its religion, the tendency of which was to confine its range to the narrow circle of science and thought prescribed by the Koran. Yet, on the whole, its performances displayed no common ability, moving though it did under the weight of these shackles: like the kaleidoscope, it threw together its few materials into such varied combination, as to startle us by their novelty and beauty, and compel us to form a high estimate of what its powers would have been under a system more favourable to their development.

CHAPTER III.

ROAD TO ANDUXAR—PLAIN OF THE GUADALQUIVIR—THE DILIGENCIA—ANDUXAR—THE PRIEST'S DISCOURSE—THE WANDERING STUDENTS—NOCTURNAL SUMMONS—ROAD TO JAEN—ARJONILLA—THE VEINTICUATRO'S REVENGE—THE ATALAYA—VEGA OF JAEN.

AT nine o'clock of a cloudless morning a lumbering equipage, known by the imposing title of a diligence, was at the door of the fonda, waiting for its cargo of passengers who had alighted to swallow a hasty breakfast. This conveyance was the usual means of transit between Seville and Madrid, and I now availed myself of its assistance to reach Anduxar, a town upon the high road to the latter city, and distant some ten leagues from Cordova. In a few moments all squabbles and arrangements were concluded, and the vehicle being towed from its moorings by a rambling team of eight mules, began to move along the narrow and

tortuous streets of Cordova, at every yard rolling heavily, like a ship in a storm. Fortunately for our safe exit into the open sea, or rather road, the foremost pair of our eight in hand was under the control of a postilion who steered us with much judgment through streets scarcely broader than the machine itself; and in due time we emerged by the Puerta Nueva into the fair way to Madrid, where all was, comparatively speaking, plain sailing. It was pleasant to exchange the rough jolting over the street pavement, and the frowns of the sombre town, for the smoothness of a beaten highway and glances into a wide prospect; yet a new discomfort speedily arose, hardly less annoying than those we left behind. Clouds of dust were raised by the feet of the mules, and these swept round the diligence, penetrated into every corner of the interior, and at times were so dense as completely to hide from view the postilion who rode in front. Through this muddy atmosphere, however, glimpses of the surrounding scenery were occasionally caught: from all that was disclosed, there was, however, little reason to regret that these peep-holes through our floating shroud of clay were so unfrequent. We were ascending the broad vale of

the Guadalquivir, from whose banks, on either side, there rose in soft swells an undulating country just on the eve of surrendering its luxuriant harvests to the hand of the reaper. On the left, at no great distance, rose a spur of the Sierra Morena, as brown and parched as if nightly swept by volcanic fire; over its swarthy brows other ridges peered, as if straining to behold a fertility denied to their own arid and desolate slopes. On the other side, across the river, there was no obstruction to the view: the eye ranged freely over a vast expanse clothed with endless breadths of corn and wheat, varying in their tints from the brightest golden to pale yellow. It was literally a waving sea of those rich colours, that, commencing at the river's margin, rose and fell in undulations like those of the heaving ocean, and sent its golden billows far into the horizon. Yet, amid this sunny prospect, there reigned a loneliness as mournful as that of the desert; never did its bleaching sands sleep in more death-like tranquillity than did this scene of luxuriance. This is one of the characteristics of Spanish scenery. In other lands a kindly feeling seems to exist between the soil and those who cultivate it; the husbandman's dwelling is by his vineyard, or

in the midst of his fields; the shepherd lays him down by his pastures green and quiet waters; the sequestered glen has its cottage, and the chalet speaks of an attachment which mountain hardships and dangers serve but to rivet: but here, an unwonted estrangement is everywhere observable; the cultivator seems to manifest an aversion for the scene of his labours, and removes his dwelling as far as possible from it. Rich, therefore, as the plain may be, it wants all those signs of life which we are accustomed to associate with fertility of soil. There are no cottages by the wayside, nor farm-houses apart at intervals; no curling smoke marks the site of homes and hearths; no scattered hamlets crown the knolls, or lie basking on the slopes; but wide and far the eye travels over a houseless prospect, so expressive, notwithstanding its natural abundance, of solitude and abandonment, that the abode of the pestilence could not surpass it in saddening impressions.

About two leagues from Cordova the road crosses the Guadalquivir by the noble bridge of Alcolea, the work of the beneficent Carlos Tercero; and then, amid a country where plantations of olives mingled their faded green with the tints of the ripe grain,

we reached the village of El Carpio. The usual spectacle of squalor and misery is presented by the collection of crumbling dwellings of which this place is composed. In the centre of these rises a tower, not of Moorish construction, as its aspect would denote, but the work of their Christian conquerors. The reader of Spanish romances must guard against supposing this to have been the home of the famous Paladin Bernardo del Carpio, the hero of many a tale and ballad; that honour belongs to a fortress which he constructed about four leagues from Salamanca, and bears the same name as this village.

Tired of gazing upon the placid features of the valley through which the road continued, I turned to examine with some minuteness the diligence and its equipments. These, whatever might be their other merits, unquestionably possessed strong claims to originality. On a low seat in front of the coupé sat the driver, grasping in one hand sundry ropes that represented reins, and in the other wielding a stunted whip. His voice, however, was in more frequent use than the lash, and truly that tongue found no rest. From the moment of starting, a series of yells, whoops, and shouts, were poured

forth in a way a Red Indian might have envied, and were employed to urge forward the team: were these ineffectual, then a few blows of the whip, smartly applied, never failed to encourage the flagging animals into a canter. But then the foremost mules, whom the lash could not reach—how are they to be stimulated? What is this? Whiz goes a pebble at one with unerring aim—and lo! the driver and his zagal are seen to be provided with bags of this ammunition, with which from time to time they assail the sleek animals, who, on their part, receive the shower with much shaking of their long ears. At the foot of a steep acclivity we found five additional mules in waiting to drag us up the ascent; these were harnessed to the others with all sorts of tackling, and being attached without the slightest attempt at method, some in front, some at the sides, or wherever fancy thought proper, the whole mass had pretty much the appearance of what in Australia is called a “mob of cattle.” This, however, was the time for our driver and his man to come forth in all their strength. While one rains a pitiless storm of missiles, the other leaps to the ground in a half frantic state, rushes up to the mob, dashes right and left a whirlwind of blows upon their

hides, hallooing and screeching at the same time with all his might. Away, then, they go up the hill at a gallop, half hid in dust, kicking out at each other and their tormentor, who runs by their side. Behind follows our lumbering ark, pitching and heaving among the ruts, and its timbers creaking at every plunge. At the summit the auxiliaries are dismissed, the zagal mounts to his perch, breathless from his exertions; and while he refreshes himself with smoking a "papel," we resume our usual jog-trot progress. These are the active members of our force: the inactives consist of four ruffian-like personages who mount guard on the roof, each with a musket between his knees, their office being to defend the diligence against all comers in hostile guise. I fear much, however, they will prove anything but true knights in the hour of need, if there be any meaning in scowling brows and sinister looks; and they have altogether the air of men who feel by no means at their ease in an honest vocation. As it is among the "cosas de Espana" to pardon the brigands who successfully defy the law, and then employ them in services like this, the presence of these worthies is easily accounted for. My word for it, they could tell if they choose many

a tale of the road, in which "Boca abajo" would figure conspicuously.

At Baylen the escort is doubled, previous to encountering the gloomy passes of the Sierra Morena, and the dreary steppes of La Mancha; but, notwithstanding these precautions, the diligence from Granada, which runs to meet this, had been attacked a few weeks ago by a party of robbers, who, besides plundering the vehicle, abstracted several of the passengers, and carried them off to their mountain haunts. One of these passengers, however, who happened to be a person of some influence, managed to persuade his captors that, if they returned to an honest life, he would ensure them a pardon; and they having, probably, made enough money, accepted the terms, and are now peaceably enjoying the fruits of their robberies. Such are the ways of Spain.

The sun was setting in the prodigal beauty of the South, mantling the distant sierras in purple, and lavishing its gold upon the waters of the Guadalquivir, when we crossed that river by a noble bridge and entered the town of Anduxar. For the next hour and a half I was engaged in the absorbing occupations connected with one's arrival at a

tolerable inn; there was dust to expel, supper to dispatch, mules and a muleteer to hire, before I proceeded, in company with one of the passengers in the diligence, to explore the town. Whatever charms it might possess were only partially revealed under the shade of evening; yet, with the broad river by its side, and surrounded by many gardens and orange-groves, it must in daylight become well its position as chief city of the rich plain in which it lies. Beyond this the town possesses few claims to notice, either in respect to works of art or historic recollections; the principal church is an edifice constructed in the plateresco style, an order of architecture peculiar to Spain, in which is exemplified how far bad taste may be carried. At one angle rises a square tower, similar to the Giralda of Seville; but, unlike that colossal structure, it stands apart from the church, and is apparently a monument of Moorish construction.

At this season of the year the evening hours, however unfavourable to the observation of external nature, are those which afford the best insight into the customs and manners of an Andalusian population. During the intense heat of the day each town lies in a state of suspended animation, from

which only as the sun begins to sink does it waken into life. As the shadows gradually deepen, so do its languid powers revive; each house pours forth its occupants to swell the concourse on the alameda, or, as here, to form groups, who slowly saunter up and down the principal streets; the buzz of conversation is mingled with the cries of water-sellers, or the whining accents of beggary; in every café or neveria are to be seen the citizens, with coffee-cups or ices before them; and on entering one, your ears are stunned with the fierce conflict of political argument. Presently, on passing the mouth of a bye street, you stop to listen to the drumming of a guitar, and the click of the castanets by which it is accompanied. The sounds announce a street tertulia: the old folks have brought out chairs before their doors, and sit in luxurious ease, contemplating three or four couple of mozas and their gallants, who are dancing the fandango with indefatigable zeal in the middle of the street. From this national spectacle you are diverted by hearing the quick rattle of sundry fans, and, turning round, encounter the gaze of two or three señoritas: they have detected a stranger, and now adopt this plan of attracting his attention; they are desirous of

seeing his face—perhaps of being seen themselves. As they approach with the unspeakably graceful step of Andalusia, their dark eyes bend inquiring but soft glances, which steal away every thought for the time, and you experience a feeling of relief when they have passed by. Next come up the mammas, dutifully following in the wake of their dark daughters, and keeping an eye upon the flirtations that spring up by the way. Perhaps, when the owners of these lustrous orbs pass by a second time, you muster up courage to address them in your most courteous Castilian; a few compliments are paid to the beauty of their native town, from whence there is an easy transition to some remarks upon the charms of its daughters: after this, everything you say is highly applauded, and considered “muy gracioso;” and when the time for parting arrives, their “adios” and “buen viaje” fall pleasantly upon the ear, and are oft remembered as your mule plods wearily along the lonely path, or when scenes of savage desolation mingle with a glowing atmosphere to harass both frame and spirit.

Perceiving the principal church to be lighted up, my companion and I entered, and found a small

congregation, chiefly composed of peasantry and old women, listening with wrapt attention to a priest who was delivering a "platica" or discourse from a pulpit attached to one of the pillars. No language is, perhaps, so well fitted for a religious address as the Castilian; its sonorous accents fill the ear, and fall with impressive solemnity upon the thoughts, which insensibly bow before tones that bespeak the language of command; while its rolling diction deepens the effect of grave admonition or noble sentiment. But all this was marred by the unhappy nature of the topic upon which the padre was descanting. His subject was neither a point of doctrine nor the praise of a cardinal virtue, but an extravagant eulogy of the Virgin Mary, accompanied with a catalogue of the marvellous powers with which she is endowed as the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven. I will spare the reader the recital of this incredible history, as the annals of superstition are at once painful and dull to an enlightened mind, but it was something new to learn that the power of working miracles had not yet departed from the Santissima Virgen; nay, more, that not later than last year it had been visibly exercised in the great commercial city of

Barcelona. "It so happened, my hearers," continued the preacher, "that in the city of Barcelona certain students approached the door of a wicked house for the purpose of entering it: lo! as they stood, a shining light interposed between them and the threshold, and looking up they beheld the figure of the immaculate mother, '*para siempre alabado sea su nombre*,' standing in the doorway with a flaming sword in her hand. Thereupon the students fled in dismay; and perceiving in the apparition a merciful warning against their evil ways, have renounced the sins of the flesh, and led unspotted lives ever since." On hearing this, my companion, who was a Madrilenian, and made no secret of his infidel opinions, gave way to a smile of incredulity. This, unluckily, caught the eye of the pulpit orator. Immediately he changed his tone, and spoke at us with the semblance of much virtuous indignation: "What! shall abominable heretics enter to sneer at holy truths? Let them, I say—" and so forth. Under such circumstances it was neither profitable nor pleasant to remain as listeners, and, in the midst of a thundering anathema, we effected our exit from the church, unperceived by the audience; indeed, our presence

there had been altogether unnoticed by any one except the preacher, as we had kept in the background, and behind the listening circle. From the gloom of the church, amid which a few lights glimmered faintly, and from the debasing themes of superstition, it was a pleasant thing to escape into the clear darkness of an Andalusian night, and look up at its stars. They spoke of peace, truth, and purity, as they have ever done since the first night of creation; but at that moment, when the language of spiritual darkness was ringing in the ear, their words of light seemed brighter than ever, and their testimony to truth more sure. One could not long look up without feeling the tranquillizing influence of such a glorious scene: the resentful spirit in which one quitted the church was gradually stilled; the outrageous fictions one heard were remembered not with disgust but with pity for the speaker and his hearers. Who could censure, while that serene sky and its thousand worlds of light seemed to be bending in compassion over the spot?


It was, in truth, a beautiful night; one to be enjoyed best in solitude, and not, as here, among a laughter-loving throng. But place and circumstances were against sentiment, and, to make matters

worse, we stumbled upon a party of students engaged in appealing to the charity of the public by a mode known from time immemorial to that fraternity. They were poor scholars, who employed their vacation in wandering through Spain, and begging in the towns through which they passed as much as would maintain them during the ensuing term at the University. It is a custom now, I believe, peculiar to Spain alone, where customs never die; but was once common in Germany, for in this manner Luther begged through the streets of Magdeburg, and acquired the knowledge which was to shatter the powers of Romish darkness. A noisy group they formed, and made the street resound with their music. One was drumming away vigorously upon a guitar, to which he sang extempore verses; another beat time with a tambourine, while a violin squeaked in concert; and to the fourth was delegated the important office of spokesman, for which the nimblest and wittiest tongue of the party is always selected. With his tricorne or three-cornered hat in hand, and a jest on his lips, he besets those who may pass by, or who are to be seen at the windows. Now, with his hand on his heart, he approaches a señorita, and supplicates her

to remember the poor students; he of the guitar meanwhile is chanting in doggrel verse to the bystanders, how her eyes are like stars and her foot a marvel of beauty: now he darts off to an old man, and reminds him that wisdom like his must see the necessity of encouraging learning: and so he goes the round of the circle, skilfully hitting the weak points of every one who seems burthened with a purse. Of course we could not expect to escape; up he came, with a low bow, and addressed us: "Caballeros protectores de la literatura, es de suponer que personas de tan alta categoria como ustedes tienen en su bolsillo un durillo por los nobles estudiantes—pero no digo tanto—una pesetilla," &c. A small coin sent him away; and then the guitarist struck up, to the tune of the "Jota estudiantina," a verse in honour of the "protectors of literature," as we were termed. Its burthen was to the effect, that "he is the true gentleman who gives silver"—an opinion that seems to be pretty widely diffused in the world, and not confined to the "noble students" alone.

When I sought my couch, it was, I found, one of a dozen, ranged round the walls of a large apartment facing the street. In this barrack the pas-

sengers by the diligence are expected to maintain the same social communion that exists by day, and were now snatching a few hours' repose previous to starting at midnight. At that hour the usual commotion took place, with more than the usual amount of growling from the sleepy passengers; at last, however, the diligence drove off, the gates of the inn were closed and barred, the lights extinguished, and, as peace and silence reigned in the house, I anticipated an uninterrupted repose in the dormitory which I could now call my own, as I was left its only tenant. Sleep, then, was beginning to load my eyelids, when I was aroused by the rattling of a pebble on the floor; it had been cast through the open casement by some hand from the street, and was accompanied by a low whistle. "Ah me! there is a plan to rob and murder me," thinks the novice in Spain, "and that is the signal of the forty thieves who are come to do the deed." No such thing: ask mine host's daughter, or the moza of the inn, and one of the twain will confess that Juanico is waiting without. When the departure of the passengers leaves the room deserted, hither comes the fair one to lean over the balcony, and enjoy that converse which is all the more agreeable from the mystery



with which it is conducted. I composed myself, therefore, again to slumber, though at first without success; another and another pebble rolled in, and at last one, more daring than the rest, reached my pallet, and smote not lightly. This was not to be borne, and I groped my way to the window, with the intention of saluting the offender with something less pleasant than the "*gratus puellæ risus ab angulo*," which he was doubtless expecting. The night, though serene, was very dark, and I looked in vain for my Romeo in the street. A darker shadow than usual was, however, observable in a doorway a few paces off, and this I conjectured was a man's figure: at all events, I addressed it, and begged it to cease from disturbing my rest; adding, moreover, the information that, if it waited only four hours, the coast would be clear for its own purposes. Whether or no the information was acted upon I know not: at the expiry of that period I was myself waiting on the bridge for the muleteer, who was to convey me to Jaen. It was still deep night, and in the darkness time passed slowly; while the only sound audible was the melancholy ripple of the river against the piers of the bridge.

My lonely watch, however, was in reality a short

one; and before the first streak of grey light our progress had been such that nearly a league lay between the southern bank of the river and the olive-wood through which we were then passing. Our route was towards the south, through a country which, though cultivated, was barren in features of natural beauty: there was, however, so much of historic interest attached to the district, that, unpicturesque as it was, one could not regard it with indifference. Every mile, nay, every rood of ground we traversed, had been the scene of chivalrous contention between the Moslem and his Christian foe: on those heights must have waved defiance the banners of the Crescent or the Cross; those barrancos must have sheltered many an ambuscade; and how often must those slopes have resounded to the cries of the Castilian ginete, or the turbaned horsemen of Granada!—for this was for long a frontier land, and here came the gallant spirits of either faith to seek and win renown in arms. History and tradition still preserve some memorials of these stirring times, in which there is always perceptible a vein of courteous and generous feeling, such as never fails to spring up between the really brave. To the right lay Arjona, the Urgabona of the Ro-

mans, now a place of little note: it was, however, the birth-place of Mohammed Ben Alhamar, who rose by his warlike virtues from the principality of this petty town to the throne of Granada. Nearer Anduxar we had passed in the dark a small village, by name Arjonilla: this was the scene of a tragic event, commemorated in many a strain by the troubadours and poets of the chivalrous times in which it occurred.

Among the most distinguished squires of Don Enrique de Villena, master of the military order of Calatrava, was one named Macias, who, besides being renowned for his valour in the field, was no mean proficient in poesy. Between him and a doucella who was attached to the train of the master, there sprang up a mutual passion, which in its consequences was fatal to one of the lovers. It came to pass that on one occasion, when Macias was absent on a distant expedition, his mistress was given in marriage by the master to an hidalgo of Porana. Both the master and the bridegroom, it is believed, were ignorant of the attachment, owing to the secrecy in which it had been enveloped. Nevertheless, in accordance with the customs of the age, the disconsolate lover did not cease to sing

the praises of his mistress, but, with a devotion that disregarded every other consideration, neglected no opportunity of approaching the señora with every token of unabated affection.

Such conduct could not fail to give umbrage to the husband, who, unwilling at first to appeal to arms, determined to carry his complaints to the master; by the latter not only was Macias sternly rebuked, but commanded to desist from his unseasonable pretensions. In vain, however, could remonstrances and mandates restrain his devouring passion; it impelled him still to unguarded demonstrations of affection; and at length the master, finding admonitions of no avail, was necessitated to send him a prisoner to Arjonilla, then a village in possession of the order. Here, in chains and deprived of liberty, his only consolation was to compose couplets in honour of her for whose sake he had braved the wrath of his order and tasted the miseries of a dungeon. Some of his sonnets reached the señora, but others, together with some correspondence, accidentally fell into the hands of her husband, whose jealous rage was thereby inflamed to the last degree. Mounting his horse, and equipped with lance and shield, he rode to Arjonilla,

and reaching the prison wherein Macias was confined, beheld him sitting at a window occupied in the manner described by the poet of a succeeding age:—

Diciendo con gran dolor,
Una cadena al pescuezo,
De su cancion el empiezo.
Lloado seas, amor
Por quantas penas padesco.

Without hesitation the other thrust his lance through the window and inflicted on Macias a mortal wound; then turning his horse round, fled with all swiftness, and escaped to the kingdom of Granada. To his victim was accorded an honourable interment; while the event became a favourite theme for the poets of his own as well as of succeeding times, to whose minds the fidelity of his love was more than a sufficient excuse for the questionable direction in which it flowed.

However rare it be in the present day for an Andalusian husband to avenge his wrongs in the blood of the offender, there are to be found, in ancient chronicles and legendary tales, ample proofs that an unsparing vengeance was the style in which their more fiery ancestors vindicated their injured honour. Here is an instance that, for complete-

ness of revengc, has few parallels: the tragedy occurred in Cordova about the middle of the fifteenth century.

Among the most noble cavaliers in that city was Don Hernando Alonso de Cordoba, commonly called the veinticuatro, from the municipal office he held, and as distinguished for valour, talents, and character, as was his spouse Doña Beatriz, a noble dame of Seville, for her feminine graces and qualities: their happiness appeared so perfect as to become proverbial through the city.

At that time the Bishop of Cordova was Don Pedro de Cordova y Solier, at whose house generally resided his brother Don Jorge, a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and commendator of its establishments in that city. As the knight was versed in all the accomplishments of the age, and was besides a relative of the veinticuatro, it is unnecessary to add that a close intimacy existed between the cousins, and that in time they became inseparable companions. Their friendship was at its height when, in a fatal hour, an unworthy passion sprang up in the bosoms of the knight and Doña Beatriz; and unhappily for the peace of Don Hernando, at the very moment when his honour

was most in danger, business of the utmost importance connected with the city summoned him to Toledo, where the court was then residing. His absence was a signal for the guilty pair to throw off the veil of secrecy; his dishonour was published in his own house, and of the numerous train of pages, doucellas, and domestics who served him, no one resented his master's disgrace except the humblest of the household. This was a slave named Rodrigo, reared in the family, who, by messages from time to time, besought his lord to hasten his departure from Toledo, without venturing to apprise him of the urgent reasons for a speedy return. In the mean time Don Jorge, whether impelled by the motive to dissipate by an affectation of indifference the suspicions of his cousin, should he entertain any, or urged by business, took the resolution of likewise setting out for Toledo. At the moment of parting with Doña Beatriz the latter placed on his finger a ring of great value, enjoining him to wear it constantly in memory of her love. It was the most precious, and at the same time the most fatal gift she could bestow. The ring had been a present from the king to the veinticuatro in token of the estimation in which he held his noble

qualities; and Don Hernando, thinking that the trust could be placed in no worthier hands, had committed it to the care of his spouse, from whose possession until now it had never departed.

Arrived at court, the first care of the knight was to renew his friendship with the veinticuatro, from whom, it need not be said, he cautiously concealed the gift of Doña Beatriz. The same prudence, however, did not regulate his conduct with the king: possibly the knight was ignorant of the history attached to the ring, but it so happened, that on kissing the hand of his sovereign, the eye of the latter was attracted by the glitter of diamonds on the subject's finger, and, looking attentively, detected his own present to the veinticuatro. However much surprised, he said nothing at the moment.

The following morning the veinticuatro and his sovereign were pacing one of the halls of the Alcazar, when after a time the conversation turned upon the arrival of the Commendator of Cordova. "Certes," said the monarch, "his appearance has revealed to me a transaction of which I did not believe you capable, Don Hernando; never did I suppose you capable of deception, or that you

would hold in light esteem the tokens of my regard."

The veinticuatro, filled with astonishment and confusion at an accusation so unexpected, entreated his majesty to state the grounds of the charge his conscience told him was undeserved on his part.

"Don Hernando," replied the monarch, "what have you done with the ring, my present? You told me that it was always in the custody of your spouse, but it is not so; you have deceived me, and bestowed it upon a cavalier who, however dear his friendship may be to you, should nevertheless be regaled with other gifts than those I bestow on my subjects as proofs of esteem. Your cousin Don Jorge is the possessor of the ring with which I rewarded your loyal services."

In that moment the thoughts of the veinticuatro were agitated by the most cruel suspicions; in a voice almost inarticulate from emotion, he solicited permission from the monarch to repair to Cordova; adding, as he took his leave, "Rest assured, señor, I shall explain this matter so satisfactorily, that its memory shall last as long as your name." In a few minutes afterwards he had crossed the Tagus and was on the road to Cordova.

His arrival, though unexpected, was welcomed with the usual tokens of joy and affection from Doña Beatriz and the household; his own feelings he studiously dissembled, and took the first opportunity of questioning the slave, whose repeated messages now seemed full of a hidden meaning. The relation of the latter confirmed his worst fears. "Enough," he cried; "be silent regarding the past, and henceforward I shall be not thy master but thy friend; but woe to thee if thy lips uncloze upon this subject." From that day he dreamt only of vengeance.

An occasion was not long in presenting itself. Don Jorge shortly after returned to Cordova, accompanied by his brother, Don Fernando, a knight of the same order; their intimacy with the veinticuatro was resumed on its former footing, and nothing on the part of the latter indicated the burning revenge that dwelt in his breast. One day he proposed they should depart for a distant part of the sierra for the purpose of enjoying the diversion of hunting; the brothers at first assented to the proposal, but as the day for their sport approached, both begged to be excused on different pretexts: these the veintieuatro feigned to receive in good

part, and set out alone for the hunting-ground, where, he informed them, he should stay five days. No sooner had he departed, than the lovers embraced an opportunity so favourable for a meeting; Don Jorge repaired to the house under the cloud of night, accompanied by his brother, whom he had persuaded to this step by representing that a doucella of the lady was disposed to regard him with a favourable eye; along with them they brought a squire named Galindo.

Meanwhile, the veinticuatro was preparing the catastrophe of this dark history. As soon as the hunting party had proceeded to a sufficient distance from the city, he feigned a slight indisposition, which he alleged would probably yield to a short repose, but commanded the cavalcade to continue their journey. Attended only by his faithful slave, he remained behind, and the two lay concealed till midnight in a thicket by the road. At that hour they retraced their steps, and, leaving their steeds a mile outside of the city, succeeded in entering it by a postern gate; from thence it was easy to reach undiscovered the mansion, into which they penetrated by scaling some walls.

Impelled by the boiling fury in his veins, he burst into the apartment of his spouse, to whom his presence was as terrible as that of death. In an instant her paramour lay before her, pierced by repeated stabs; and she herself would have shared the same fate in the following moment, had she not fallen senseless at his feet. In that state, the transition from insensibility to dissolution would have been a death without pain, and such was not the purpose of his thirsting vengeance; quitting her, therefore, he entered the adjoining chamber, in which he found the doucella and her gallant, both of whom he despatched with the blood-stained weapon in his hand. His next victim was the unfortunate squire, Galindo, whom he encountered in the corridor, endeavouring to conceal himself; he, too, shared the fate of his master, and fell covered with wounds. One would think that enough of blood had been shed to appease the most exacting revenge; but the long suppressed wrath of the veinticuatro had risen into the fury of a demon, which blood itself could scarcely satiate. Rushing through the house like a madman, he burst into chamber after chamber, slaying and wounding all whom he

met, without distinction of age or sex. Tradition relates, that on that night he slew fifteen persons of his household.

Somewhat calmed by the aspect of this scene of slaughter, he returned to the apartment of his spouse, who, having recovered her senses, was now a prey to all the horrors of her situation. On seeing him enter, she threw herself at his feet, imploring mercy in an agony of fear and remorse. For a little time the veinticuatro listened to her prayers with a horrible satisfaction; and then, approaching her, not with precipitate haste, but with the step of one who deliberately executes the behests of justice, buried his poignard in her bosom.

The same hour he and the slave were hurrying towards the frontier of France. There, however, he did not remain long: revenge, according to the maxims of the age, was the duty of an injured husband; and, terrible as was that of the veinticuatro, it did not restrain his sovereign from shortly afterwards conceding to him a full pardon for an act which was considered necessary for the vindication of his honour. He returned to Cordova, and is said to have subsequently distinguished himself much by his exploits against the Moors.

About two leagues from Jaen, we passed through a miserable hamlet called Fuente del Rey. The only remarkable object in this was an atalaya, or watch-tower, now dismantled and grey with years. This ruin marked the district as having been a border land, where such places of strength were indispensable to the security of its scattered population, and reminded one of the peel towers, or fortified houses, with which the Scottish borders were once studded. Like these fortresses, which were generally within sight of each other, the better to communicate intelligence of the foe by beacons or other signals, this atalaya was in full view of the castle of Jaen, and had, doubtless, been constructed to answer a similar purpose. From this point a wide prospect over the vega of Jaen was commanded: here and there a spot of dark green caught the eye, or a line of straggling trees marked the course of some stream, but everywhere else its aspect was that of a parched and dusty land. Gladly one turned to the dark ranges that encircled this brown expanse, and traced the serrated outlines of the ridges as they rose above each other. Directly in front, but in the furthest distance, towered above all the Sierra de Mancha Real, distinguished by a remarkable gap in its loftiest

peak, which seemed cloven half way down from the summit; nearer, and to the right hand, was the Sierra of Jaen, a bold and craggy chain, which appeared to have advanced into the vega as if with the intention of crossing to the opposite boundary, but had abruptly halted at the commencement of its journey; on the summit of a rocky pinnacle, heading the advance, were to be seen the walls of the fortress, and at its base the city of Jaen.

I was flattering myself with the prospect of a short journey across the vega, being deceived by the apparent proximity of the city, when my muleteer cut short my anticipations by the assurance that, in reality, two leagues of road were yet to be traversed. "Malditas leguas!" he emphatically added, from a recollection of his winter journey, when the almost impassable condition of the track, not to speak of the swollen torrents to be crossed, must have severely tried the endurance of his animals. Instead, however, of quagmires and turbid brooks, we encountered nothing worse than dust and channels without water; once or twice a small stream trickled among the shining stones that occupied the bottom of these water-courses, but it was invariably salt to the taste, and our mules, though thirsty,

refused to drink of it. Traversing this hot plain at a slow pace, it was a welcome change when we reached the skirts of the sierra. Though the limestone rock everywhere pierced the surface in naked masses, or lay strewed around in grey blocks, there were yet spots of verdure between, and streamlets clear as crystal came leaping down from the crags, and crossed our path with a cheerful murmur. Then came gardens, whose nourishment was from these transparent waters, diffused in numberless rills through each enclosure; and last of all came the walls of the city, which we reached at noon.

CHAPTER IV.

JAEN—ITS HISTORY—CHIVALROUS ACT OF MOHAMMED BEN ALHAMAR—ANCIENT ASPECT OF THE CITY—THE CATHEDRAL—PRIESTLY CICERONE—HIS KINDNESS—CASTLE OF JAEN—ANDALUCIAN SCENERY—THE BORRACHO—PENA DE MARTOS—THE FATE OF THE CARVAJALS—GALLANT DEFENCE OF THE FORTRESS—EFFECTS OF A CONFLAGRATION.

OF the four kingdoms into which the province of Andalucia was anciently divided, that of Jaen is probably the least known to the general reader. While Cordova, Seville, and Granada successively became the seats of the Arab and Moorish dominions south of the Sierra Morena, this city never reached a higher dignity than that of a provincial capital, sometimes independent, but never the master of its Moslem neighbours. In extent and fertility of territory it was inferior in no respect to the others; and the cause, therefore, of its subordinate position in Andalucian affairs must be ascribed partly to its insulated situation, and latterly, when

the Moorish empire was sinking, to its proximity to the inveterate foes of the Crescent. Nevertheless, it yielded to the arms of the Christian conqueror only when the capture of Cordova had lessened its powers of resistance, had deprived its gallant defenders of a potent alliance, and left it alone and unsupported to brave the assaults of the victorious Castilians. But the reduction of the city and its castle was no easy task even under such disadvantages; its defence against the Christians was protracted and obstinate, and well worthy of its ancient name; and a capitulation was finally accorded under circumstances which display the chivalrous spirit of the times, and fall like a sunbeam across the dreary path of war.

Jaen, from its geographical position no less than its natural strength, was the chief bulwark on the north to the kingdom of Granada, founded by Mohammed Ben Alhamar, a monarch of no ordinary abilities. The Moorish king made efforts commensurate with the importance of the object to save the city from the fate of Cordova. In person he led an army to its assistance, but was signally defeated; the succours he despatched were intercepted; and at length it became apparent, not only that its fall was

inevitable, but that in the catastrophe might be involved the dawning fortunes of his own capital. In such a dismal situation he flung aside his arms, and adopted a resolution that bespeaks the chivalry of his character. Without having obtained a safe-conduct from Fernando, he repaired alone to the camp of that monarch, sought an audience from him, disclosed his name and rank, and offering to become his vassal, kissed his hand in token of homage.

Fernando was not to be surpassed in generosity; he received his noble rival with every mark of distinction, and showed himself worthy of such confidence. The treaty between the two monarchs was speedily concluded; Jaen was surrendered, and the Moorish king became the feudatory of his more successful and powerful adversary, but in return was guaranteed in the possession of his remaining dominion. These terms, though hard, were fraught with advantage to Aben Alhamar. They enabled him to consolidate the wreck of the 'Mohammedan Empire in Andalucia, and to lay the foundation of a kingdom which endured for more than two centuries; and, but for his timely concessions, would

have fallen in its infancy to the overshadowing power of the Castilians.

I found it easier to credit the antiquity of Jaen than that of its sister capitals of Seville and Cordova. Take from these latter cities their Moorish walls, alcazars, mosques, and giraldas, and in the remaining mass of brick and plaster little survives to remind the observer of the turbaned race which lived and died within its precincts; but here we have a city exhibiting in its street architecture abundant traces of its former masters, and it would not be difficult to imagine that they had abandoned their homes just the other day to the enemies of their creed. Towards the street the doors are low, the windows few and small; while the massive aspect of the houses, and the dark tints of the limestone used in their construction, give them the air of prisons, and cause one to ask if hearts have ever beat lightly within these sombre dwellings. The town consists of one principal street, encircling the base of a hill, on whose summit rise the walls of its castle. As you walk along, you see on either hand narrow and tortuous lanes, into which a sunbeam never strays. These in the cities of our native land we should mark as the abodes of want and misery,

and should not start to see wretchedness in every shape seeking shelter in them; but poverty here wears a smile, however heavy the burden it has to endure: the merry tinkle of the guitar is heard in these its haunts; and there, in that alley a little broader than the others, a few of its sons and daughters are dancing more blithely than the inmates of a ball-room. The swarthy maidens, though humbly clad, might vie with the best in natural gracefulness; neither is their mirth boisterous or rude. A few flowers mingle with their coal-black locks, and set off their dusky charms more effectively than sparkling jewels. Should the dancer drop one, it is picked up and replaced without an effort, invariably without consulting a glass; and had you studied the rules of taste your whole lifetime, you could not have done it better. But the dance is ended: the castanets cease to rattle, and the young folks, breathless and flushed, assemble before a house, on the threshold of which is seated an old man wrapped in a tattered brown cloak. Presently he appears to become the object of some general wish: those are gestures of entreaty that are directed to him by the youthful circle; doubtless he is famed as a teller of stories—an accomplishment in as high

repute in Andalusia as it is in the East—and he is assailed with the usual cry, “Abuelo, euent’ usted un cuento.” Apparently their wishes are to be gratified, for the whole party assume the attitudes of listeners, and some seat themselves on the ground at his feet; then begins some romance of the wars with the Moslems, or the legend of a treasure-seeker, or perhaps the adventures of some brigand, who is invariably painted as the friend of the poor but the spoiler of the rich, and driven to his lawless career by intolerable wrongs. While he speaks, all eyes are bent upon him, and a breathless silence prevails, which is broken only when the tale is ended. Immediately on the last word being spoken, a chorus of exclamations and questions proceeds from the throats of his hearers, and for some time they canvass the incidents of his narrative, and the fate of the hero, with all the ardour of Andalusians in regard to trifles. Then the guitar sounds some monotonous strain, the castanets are handled, and a fandango or bolero engages the invigorated dancers in its rapid evolutions.

At the southern wing of the city stands the cathedral, a modern structure in the Greco-Roman style. In point of design, it boasts of more correct-

ness than such edifices generally display in Andalusia; but the interior is disfigured by the position of the choir, which occupies the centre of the building, and circumscribes the space allotted to worshippers. There is, however, much beauty in the elaborate carvings of this choir, representing passages from the New Testament, the execution of which denotes the artist to have possessed no small skill, whatever we may think of the purity of his taste.

The sacristy is one of the finest in Andalusia: it is a spacious and lofty apartment, the walls of which are lined with Corinthian pilasters, and the general effect is that of noble simplicity. While admiring its proportions, and regretting, at the same time, that it formed almost a solitary exception to the architectural barbarisms by which every sacred edifice in Andalusia is deformed, a priest approached, and courteously accosted me.

“Dispense *vm.* Señor, *vm.* es Franceses?”

“No, Señor,” I replied, “Inglés, para servir a *vm.*”

This was the preface to a long conversation, in which my priestly questioner showed himself to be an admirer of the fine arts; and at length, carried

away by his enthusiasm, he requested permission to act as my cicerone through the cathedral. I need not say that his offer was gladly accepted, and we strolled from chapel to chapel, while he pointed out such objects as were worthy of note; pictures, sculptures, wooden images, and relics, had each their tale, which I refrain from imparting to the reader, as they would prove less interesting to him than to the worthy priest, in whose eyes the most insignificant trifle attached to his church was possessed of extraordinary virtues and excellences, upon which he failed not to expatiate long and eloquently. Among the relics was the famous Santa Faz, or Holy Face of our Saviour, an object of such devout veneration among the superstitious in Andalucia, that many carry miniatures of it on their persons as charms against danger. The relic I did not see, for it is exposed to the public gaze only twice in the year; but it is said to be the representation of our Saviour's countenance, which was effected while he was on the cross. On that occasion Saint Veronica wiped his countenance with her handkerchief, and on taking it away, the image of his features was found miraculously impressed on it, and hence the origin of the Santo Rostro.

While employed in an examination of the choir, he left me, in order to perform mass in an adjacent chapel; such as I understood, being his daily duty. Many chapels have been founded by the pious on the condition that daily worship be offered up in them; so that, whether there be a congregation or no, a priest must be in attendance to discharge the sacred obligation. On rejoining him, I found myself the sole spectator of his religious offices, which, on my appearance, he proceeded to hurry to a conclusion, having first motioned me to take a seat on a bench within a few feet of the altar. If the mass was ill said, or mingled with profane conversation, I fear I have to answer for being the cause, although innocently. My courteous friend could not reconcile with his politeness the idea of my waiting in silence till its termination, and every moment, therefore, he was breaking off from the service to address some remark relative to the works of art within sight, in order that my thoughts might be agreeably occupied during the detention to which I was subjected. At last his task came to an end, and seating himself on the bench beside me, we entered into an amicable discourse upon points of faith. It was apparent that my clerical friend, however conver-

sant with the doctrines of his own church, knew very little of the Protestant creed; every point of difference was therefore a matter of wonder, and many were the Ave Marias which interrupted my explanations. But beyond these no harsher word escaped him in reference to the startling heresies I unfolded; indeed, so careful was he to avoid any phrase that might savour of offence, that upon unwittingly using the expression "*nosotros Christianos*" (we Christians), in speaking of his own belief, he corrected himself, and in place of that term, the sole right to which Spaniards arrogate to themselves, he modified it into the more specific one of "*nosotros Catolicos*."

When we rose to part, he added to his adieus an invitation to visit him that evening at his own abode. I went accordingly, and found it at the furthest extremity of a mean and narrow alley. Descending a few steps, I reached the door, and thence traversing a low and dingy passage, was ushered into a spacious and elegant apartment, lighted by several large windows: over these and the doors depended damask hangings; the rest of the furniture was antique and costly, while several paintings on the walls, and the presence of a piano and organ, bespoke their owner to be a man of cultivated tastes. In an oratory ad-

joining was an altar, surmounted by an *Ecce Homo* by Velasquez. From the windows was commanded a fine view of the vega, over which the shadows of evening were fast creeping. In the distance stretched across the horizon the Sierra de Mancha Real, now reflecting back the last glances of day. As its sharp and jagged summits rose up tinged with fire, and overtopped the darkness in which their bases were enveloped, it wanted but little to carry the imagination back to the times when the fires of Celtic worship blazed at nightfall from these pinnacles, and lighted them up just as the setting sun was now doing.

Seated on one of the comfortable sofas of the apartment—a luxury I had not enjoyed for months—the evening passed too rapidly away. I protracted my stay as long as I reasonably could, but this notwithstanding my kind entertainer had not yet done with me; next morning he was in the cathedral, waiting to conduct me through the vaults, which are seldom shown to strangers. In one was a kind of natural mummy, carefully protected from injury by being enclosed in a glass case; it was the corpse of a canon, who was buried in the year 1702, and when acci-

dentally disinterred, was found to have resisted decay; every feature was in a state of perfect preservation, and except for the hollowness of the cheeks, and the colour of the skin, which resembled parchment, the countenance might have passed for that of a sleeper. From the foundation we ascended to the towers, which were cracked and rent in several places by the terrible earthquake of 1755. From hence the city was displayed to view, and the position of the cathedral clearly discerned. Close to it, on the south, was the ancient wall of the city, studded with its Moorish towers, and running upwards to join the fortification of the castle. To the latter stronghold I climbed in the course of the day, and could not but admire the strength of its position. From the vega it appeared united to the range of which it was the termination, and strong only on the side facing the plain; but on reaching its rocky site, a yawning ravine came into view, cutting it off from the neighbouring ridge, and converting it into an isolated and inaccessible post. With great labour and trouble, the Moors had carried a wall round the brow of this natural citadel, thus enclosing an area of several acres, which was ready to serve either as

a camp, a town, or a fortress, as circumstances required; and in either capacity was proof against all enemies but famine.

From this elevation a wide and strangely varied prospect met the eye. Below, the city, belting the foot of the steep acclivities with a narrow girdle of habitations, mixed with spires and towers; without its walls commenced the vega, a far extended and monotonous plain, stripped of its harvests, and as lonely as the waste of waters: its boundaries were sunburnt ridges, upon which no green leaf fluttered; here they swelled up into rounded eminences, deeply furrowed by the channels of wintry torrents; there they shot up rugged and angular, flinging out buttresses of iron strength and hue from their sides; and far in the distance other elevations rose upon the horizon like the wing of night, and cast dark frowns towards this scene so mournfully desolate.

Turning from the plain to the sierra behind me, the same spectacle of loneliness was repeated, but with sterner accompaniments. Splintered and shattered crags, dark and rugged ravines, steep slopes strewn with rocky masses, tall cliffs and stony mounds, were grouped together in wild dis-

order, and might have served for a representation of the Temple of Desolation in ruins. Not a sound broke in upon the silence that reigned around; no murmur of streams came up from below, no scream of the eagle echoed among the crags, no voice of rural life rose into the air; all was as still as utter solitude could make it, though a city peopled with thousands lay within a bow-shot. Then, through openings in the nearer ridges, the eye caught glimpses of the background to the picture—an elevated wilderness of rocky steeps, full of dusky glens, narrow gorges winding darkly into the distance, shivered summits, and broken mountain crests; all these formed a scene lonely, savage, and drear.

Such is Andalusia as she commonly presents herself among her mountain scenery: her features then, though grand and noble, seem to express none but the darkest moods of nature; sometimes bleak and gloomy, sometimes sullen and lowering, but never smiling. No! there is a cloud upon her countenance even in her happiest moments; even when it softens amid her blooming vegas, where verdure and crystal rills join with the perfumed breath of the orange-flower to charm the senses, a

withering shade will steal across from the nearest sierra, and fall with mournful effect upon the prospect.

At four o'clock I left Jaen, not, however, before bidding adieu to the worthy clerigo, according to the custom of the country. "Amigo," said he, "you will never return to Jaen; but if you have anything to do here, remember that the Prebendario C—— will serve you as far as lies in his power."

With expressions of esteem, which on my side at least were unfeigned, we parted; and in a few minutes thereafter I was coasting round the walls of the city, in company with the lad who acted as muleteer. About half a league on our way we overtook a man mounted on a donkey travelling the same road, who, on our appearance, proceeded, without ceremony, to join company. To have made any objections to his society would have been, according to the notions of the country, a churlish and unhandsome act; but never was I more disposed to do so than on beholding his countenance, upon which a villanous compound of evil passions was plainly stamped.

"Going to Baena, Señor?" was his first query, which I answered in the affirmative; a long pause

then ensued, during which he stealthily scrutinized my equipments and appearance, which seemed to strike him as something strange and novel. At length he exclaimed, in the same short-hand style in which he accosted me, "Discharged soldier, sir?"—eyeing, at the same time, the gun I carried. I shook my head, and our new companion relapsed into a state of greater perplexity than before; from which, after another and longer pause, he emerged to offer with officious zeal to carry the double-barrel, which still seemed to fascinate his eyes. No man in Spain, possessed of his sober senses, would dream of making this request; it hastened the conclusion to which in my own mind I had been arriving in regard to the querist. I simply replied that I never trusted my gun to others, for fear of accidents; and here chimed in my muleteer—"What says the refran? La escopeta y la muger no se da a nadie" (a gun and a wife are lent to nobody). With this answer our questioner was silenced, and not another word passed between us so long as he remained in our company, which he abruptly quitted on passing a wine-shop in the small village of Torrecampo. "Ah! borracho!" cried my muleteer, in a voice expressive of the strongest

abhorrence and disgust; "see how the drunkard goes to his trough."

This he said in the tone with which all Andalusians speak of a being so degraded as the habitual slave of intoxication; indeed, no stigma upon the character is considered so vile as that of drunkenness, and no worse affront can be offered to a peasant than to style him "borracho," a term of reproach immeasurably worse in his eyes than the name of murderer. Sober and temperate himself, he rarely suffers the wine-cup to touch his lips, and would deem himself disgraced if it betrayed him into excess; moreover, he sees it to be the source of nearly all the brutal crimes committed in his country, the great proportion of which spring from the wine-shops, among whose frequenters the navaja is constantly produced to settle disputes, and horrible murders in this way committed. I do not, however, include in these remarks the arrieros and caleseros, a class with which the traveller is most frequently brought into contact. These men, true to the habits of their calling, which all over the world appears to be a thirsty one, have no objection to the juice of the grape, and imbibe it freely: for this, many among them substitute a fiery liquid, called

“aguardiente anisado,” that is, brandy flavoured with aniseed; which few, I think, will taste without characterising as a detestable mixture.

To the left, rising high above the low chain with which it was connected, was a precipitous peak of peculiar shape, and, like all the isolated elevations in this district, crowned by battlements and towers as weather-stained as their foundations of primeval rock. A mysterious interest hangs round this lofty height, and I fastened my eyes upon its dark sides as if it were yet possible to discover the exact spot upon which was perpetrated the tragedy that gives it a place in history. What reader of the Spanish chronicles does not remember the Peña de Martos, the fate of the knightly brothers precipitated from its summit, and the singular doom of their unjust sovereign?

Ferdinand the Fourth of Castile was holding his court in Palencia, when one morning the lifeless body of a favourite courtier, Juan Alonso de Benavides, was discovered at the very gate of the royal alcazar. Who the false assassins were, the utmost exertions made by the monarch failed to indicate; but suspicion at last fell upon the two brothers, Pedro and Juan Alonso de Carvajal, who were

serving at the time as the royal guard. The accused boldly protested their innocence of the charge, which appears to have been wholly unsupported by evidence to criminate them—but in vain; the vengeance of the monarch was to be appeased only by blood: whether immediate or not mattered little, and both were condemned to die. The unhappy men were conveyed to Madrid, where they were executed by being hurled from the summit of its loftiest cliff. The strangest part of the tale is yet to be told. Previous to the awful sentence being inflicted on them, the innocent knights invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon their unjust monarch, and cited him to meet them within thirty days at the bar of Divine Justice. Their summons would appear not to have passed unheard. Before the expiry of the month, Ferdinand had joined his victims in the world of spirits, having suddenly died in Jaen while taking his death: hence he is styled in history the *Impunado*, or *Summoned*, in allusion to this mysterious event.

There are, however, other pages in the early chronicles of Spain, which surround this rock with the worthier deeds of chivalrous gallantry. Soon after its conquest from the Moors in 1223 by Sancho

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nando, it was bestowed by that warlike and sagacious monarch on the military order of Calatrava, in accordance with the dictates of a wise policy, by which a community of warriors was interposed between his recent acquisitions and the hereditary foes of his crown and faith. In the hands of that powerful order, to whom at the same time were conceded large possessions in the vicinity, as well as several towns, it rose to be a fortress of no common strength, and usually bore the brunt of hostilities proceeding from the side of Granada. On one occasion, however, the stronghold was on the brink of returning to the sway of its Moslem masters, and was only rescued from its perilous strait by a stroke of female ingenuity. Shortly after its capture by the Castilians, a formidable force, led by Mohamed Ben Alhamar, one of the most warlike kings of Granada, suddenly appeared upon the frontier, and surrounded the castle with overwhelming numbers. No time could have been more opportunely chosen for such a plan, as scarcely a spearman remained to guard the walls. Its governor, the Conde de Lara, adelantado of the frontier, was attending the royal council in Toledo; his nephew, to whom he had devolved the important trust of defending it, was,

with culpable rashness, making incursions upon the Moorish dominions with the scanty garrison, in place of abiding by the post confided to his arm. With the assurance, therefore, of finding an easy prey, the Moorish monarch, aware of the scantiness of its defenders but not of their total absence, advanced boldly to the foot of the rock, and marshalled his host for an assault. What was his surprise, however, to behold the battlements crowned, as if by magic, with bands of knights and men at arms, who, with banners waving, and loud shouts of defiance, replied to the wild cries of his own soldiery. Such an unexpected spectacle damps the ardour of the monarch, and he meditates making preparations for a siege in form, when a commotion in the rear of his army arouses his attention. It is the returning garrison, who, opportunely augmented by some knights of Calatrava, and stimulated by the example of their young leader, are breaking through his ranks and cutting a path to the beleaguered fortress. Surprised and dismayed, the Moorish host gives way before the fury of their onset, and the victorious band reaches without loss the castle gates, which they enter in triumph. What strange forms are these that meet their eyes? In front

stands the noble Condesa de Lara, while behind are ranged the damsels of her household, wearing corslets and helmets, and grasping swords in their hands. It was they who, on the approach of the enemy, donned the armour of men, and mounting to the defenceless ramparts, displayed those warlike groups that seemed to wait impatiently with lance and sword for the attack.

Nearly a hundred years later, a more successful blow was struck by the Moors, and Martos fell into their hands at a period when the kingdom of Castile was more than usually distracted by dissensions among its powerful and turbulent nobility. At such times the successes of the Moslems were in proportion to the degree of discord prevailing in their opponent's councils; but though this may have contributed to the capture of Martos, it is probable that its fall was in a great measure owing to the employment of cannon, which were used during the siege. In the previous year of 1325 Baza had surrendered to the Moors; its reduction, according to the testimony of their historians, being principally effected by those new engines of destruction which, as they expressed it, launched globes of fire that, like the bolts of the tempest, laid low the towers and walls of the city. The same terrible

means were employed against Martos, whose natural strength, though far superior to that of the above-named city, was no defence against the thunders of the new invention. . and its capture speedily ensued, accompanied by the slaughter of its brave defenders and the captivity of their families.

It was nightfall when we reached Torreximeno, my quarters for the night. The village boasted of a plaza, at one corner of which was situated the inn. Its internal accommodations were, to my surprise, far superior to those of the village hostelrys one usually meets with in Andalusia; and though the floor of my chamber had a slope like the deck of a vessel heeling over to a stiff breeze, it was a luxury to enjoy this in solitude, and to be removed from the clamour and noise of the muleteers who filled the lower story.

At daybreak we were beyond the village, and crossing the scanty stream of the Rio Salado by a dilapidated bridge. Extensive groves of olives clothed its banks, and covered the country for many a mile on each side of our track; but these we gradually left behind, on descending from the high and undulating ground through which we had pursued our way since leaving Jaen. Our route now led us by the southern skirts of the great valley

of the Guadalquivir, which here, as at every other point where I had touched it, displayed the exuberant fertility of its soil. At one spot there came prominently into view the evils of leaving a large tract of land without fences or enclosures. By some mishap, fire had been communicated to the ripe wheat; and as there was no let or hindrance to its progress, the flames had swept far and wide ere their course was stayed: as near as it was possible to guess, two thousand acres had thus fallen to the consuming element. In the midst of the devastation stood a farmhouse, looking disconsolately upon the region of blackened stubble and scorched earth that now supplied the place of its golden harvests.

Passing the Venta de Doña Maria, once a notorious harbour for robbers, we reached soon after midday a slight eminence from which the spires of Baena became visible. Its situation was a commentary upon the warlike propensities of former ages. At the foot of a pretty high ridge there rose a conical elevation, severed from the other by a valley, and by nature strongly fortified with steep and abrupt slopes; the summit was crowned by a castle called La Casa del Duque, from whose walls the town extended downwards, and was encircled by fortifications of Moorish origin.



CHAPTER V.

BAENA—THE TOMB OF THE POMPEYS—PASSAGE OF ARMS WITH
THE INNKEEPER—STRENGTH OF LOCAL FEELING IN SPAIN—
THE SIMA DE CABRA—ITS MYSTERIOUS HISTORY—MURDER
WILL OUT—A SPANISH CRIMINAL PROCESS—ASPECT OF AN
ANDALUCIAN CAMPINA—CAPTURE OF BOABDIL THE UNLUCKY
—LUCENA—PRISON OF BOABDIL—MOONLIGHT DANCE ON THE
ALAMEDA—ROUTE TO GRANADA—NOCTURNAL RIDE—VEGA
OF GRANADA.

DURING the intense heat of an Andalusian noon, it is neither wise nor pleasant to encounter the rays of the sun while their stroke is most biting; and the traveller ought rather to follow the custom of the country, which defers active exertion to the cool of the evening or morning, when it is attended with least danger. For these reasons, it was near sunset when I stood upon the castle walls with the comandante beside me, leaning over the battlements and surveying the wide prospect, while he communicated the names of the various hamlets

and towns that were scattered over the broad plain. To the northwards, about six miles distant, though it seemed almost under the eye, was a solitary farmhouse, which was all that marked the site of *Castrum Priscum*, a town of some note in the ancient province of *Bœtica*. Every day the labourer discloses some memorial of its existence, as he drives the plough over the foundations of what were once temples and dwelling-houses, and brings to light domestic utensils, earthenware, medals, warlike weapons, and other tokens of the habits and daily life of its Roman population. The discovery, however, which attracted considerable attention at the time, was that of a sepulchral vault containing the ashes of a family who bore the illustrious name of Pompey. In the year 1833, some labourers connected with the farm pierced through an arch of stone, which on investigation was found to be the roof of a subterranean chamber, some ten feet long by seven broad. On descending into it, they found on either side, about a foot and a half from the ground, a stone shelf upon which rested fourteen cinerary urns, mingled with lachrymatories, vials, and bowls, one of which was of very elegant design and workmanship. In one corner stood a

leaden jar of peculiar form, resembling in shape and size a beehive inverted, which served as a case for a lamp; and, improbable as it sounds, the men united in affirming that from this a light was streaming on their feet effecting an aperture in the roof, but was extinguished either by the admission of the external air, or by the falling of some rubbish upon the spot, by which the lamp was broken and its contents spilt. Be this as it may, the remains of some glutinous liquid adhered to the fragments of the lamp, and were undoubtedly the residuum of the oil or other substance by which it was fed. Fortunately for the preservation of these interesting relics, the proprietor of the land was a man of cultivated mind, and took care to have them transported to his house in Baena, where I had an opportunity of examining the whole collection. The urns were of various dimensions and shapes, generally oblong and about a foot in length, and were rather rudely formed of grey limestone. Upon one side was carved the name of the deceased; and, save that simple inscription, which appeared as sharply cut as the day on which it issued from the graver's hands, no other embellishment adorned the exterior. Within, there was of course the

usual contents of dust and ashes, mingled with fragments of calcined bone. But the names of their owners aroused a deeper interest, and carried one out of the field of antiquarian curiosity into the more attractive one of historic speculation. Who was the Pompey whose ashes were interred in the first of these urns?—as appears from the following inscription:—

M. POMPEIUS. Q. F. GAL. ICSTNIS
II. VIR PRIMUS. DE FAMILIA
POMPEIA.

The question is difficult to answer satisfactorily, but one thing is certain, that these were not the remains of the great Pompey, as is urged by a worthy Franciscan monk of Baena; for, however intimate might be the ties between that distinguished name and Andalusia, where its last hopes expired on the plain of Munda, it is stretching conjecture too far to suppose that his ashes were transported from Egypt to rest in an obscure town of a distant Roman province. It is far more probable that this was the sepulchre of a branch of the Pompeian family, which appears to have settled here, and, from the fact of several barbarous names being engraved on other urns, to have intermarried, or otherwise been

closely allied, with a race of native origin. These names are certainly sufficiently uncouth, and such as "would have made Quintilian stare and gasp."

The first is Velgus, and then follow Ildrons, Igalthis, Velgan, Sic anbahan, to which must be added a female one, Junia Insghaana. Whether they are of Celtiberian or Phœnician derivation is a question for the learned to decide; but it must be confessed that in the pronunciation of the words there is something that reminds us of the East. On the last of the urns was carved the solitary word GRACCHI, which to the erudite monk above mentioned was a sufficient foundation for rearing another theory, in which the place of sepulture of those popular leaders was transferred from Rome to this remote spot. The worthy father, however, strangely omitted to point out how, when, and for what purpose their exhumation was undertaken; and appeared to think that, because Gracchi were slain at Rome, and Gracchi were buried here, no further proof was needed to establish their identity, and that it was out of the question to suppose there could be other bearers of that name than those of whom history makes mention.

Mine host of the posada in Baena was the pos-

essor of a big and burly frame, a loud voice, and bloated features, expressive of a dogged and brutal nature. His portrait, unattractive as it is, occasionally rises before my memory, for it came to pass that between the original and myself there occurred a dispute, which, commencing like those of Homer's heroes, with a war of words, terminated at last in an appeal to arms on both sides. The cause of the fray was the very matter-of-fact occurrence of an exorbitant bill. On all occasions I had satisfied the demands of innkeepers without a murmur, and I would recommend travellers in Spain to do likewise; after all, their extortion generally amounts to a few pesetas only, the saving of which is more than counterbalanced by the expenditure of time and temper, inseparable from the half hour's wrangling and vociferation necessary to recover them. Mine host of Baena, however, must needs add to his bill an insolent manner and a bullying tone, which were far harder to digest than his outrageous charges. Had he but indulged in a little of the *suaviter in modo*, one might have submitted peaceably to the *fortiter in re*; but when a man confronts you with brows as black as thunder, and enforces his demands with a swagger and strange oaths, he looks so like

the robber who cries "Stand, and deliver!" that you speedily get into the best possible humour for knocking him down, or being knocked down yourself. Accordingly, no parliamentary guardian of the nation's interests ever cut down a chancellor's budget more ruthlessly than I did the items of the "cuenta" submitted to me; during which process, my mozo, by a stroke of generalship worthy of his namesake, Gonsalvo de Cordova, succeeded in withdrawing with bag and baggage, so that I was left unencumbered to cover the retreat.

"Well," said the impatient host, lashing himself into a fury, as he foresaw a storm brewing; "are you not done?"

"There," I replied, tendering him exactly one half of his demand, which yet was a sum at which a native traveller would have shrugged his shoulders. A frightful change came over the man's countenance as I did this. Without a word, he struck my hand from below, causing the silver to fly in all directions, and then rushing to the doorway, planted himself there. While his features were convulsed with passion, he swore with horribly blasphemous oaths, that my blood should stain the navaja in his hand before I departed without ren-

dering him the last farthing of his just demands. On hearing his voice, now raised to the loudest pitch, there jumped from a side door a sort of clerk employed in the house, whose red eyes, unfurnished with lashes, gave him a disgusting air of dissipation. This worthy also drew his navaja, and imitated, as well as he could, the furious gestures of his master. For myself, I merely put my hands into the pockets of my jacket, and, stepping up to the two, said as quietly as I could to mine host, "*Amigo*, I *must* pass; and if you will not suffer me, I shall be then obliged to summon my friends."

"What friends?" said the other, with a scornful laugh, and a flourish of his blade before my eyes.

"These," I replied, withdrawing a hand from each pocket, and showing to his astonished gaze that each grasped a pocket-pistol.

Now, there is something particularly unpleasant in seeing a loaded pistol pointed at one's person with no friendly intent, and I could understand, therefore, how such a sight wrought upon my host's feelings a magical alteration: he looked aghast, his braggart air vanished, and lastly his navaja found its way back to the folds of his girdle. His confederate did not take a second look at the little

implements, but bolted into the escribania as quickly as he had emerged, and began to scribble away as if his life depended upon the rapidity of his pen's movements.

"Vamos, vamos," said his master; "let us drop this jest, it has lasted long enough."

"Be it so," I replied; "and now, I presume, you are satisfied?"

"Si, Señor," said he, seizing my hand, and shaking it in a very friendly way; "and let me give you this advice, Señor. You are going to Lucena: beware of the innkeepers there; they are the greatest rogues in all the neighbourhood." And then, patting me on the shoulder, suffered me to depart.

"I'd as lief he had smote me on the mouth with ratsbane;" but, saying nothing, I crossed the threshold, and descended the steep road leading towards Lucena. At the foot of the declivity I found my muleteer in waiting; and, turning the mules into a path which mounted the ridge on the southern side of the town, we kept along its brow, winding through extensive groves of olives. Through occasional openings, fine views were caught, on the right hand, of the plain beneath, in the midst of which rose, half-shrouded in vapour, the Sierra de Estepa.

There was no want of life on the road, for at every turn we met drives of mules; their sleepy masters reeling on their saddles as the patient animals stepped cautiously in single file, and only unobscuring their eyes to mutter a drowsy "Vaya usted con Dios, caballeros," when we passed. My own mazo was an "hijo de Baena," a "son of Baena," as the Spaniards poetically phrase it—a fact I discovered by unwittingly making an observation that hurt that blind attachment which every Spaniard bears to his native pueblo. "Are then," said I, "the innkeepers of Lucena as great rogues as those of Baena?"

"Senor," he answered, indignantly, "the innkeepers of Baena are the best of their class; son muy honrados, and very different from the gente of Lucena, and especially the posaderos there, who chupan la sangre de viajeros" (suck the blood of travellers.) "Vaya! I would not be an inhabitant of Lucena for a million of reals."

This chord of local feeling is one that vibrates in Spain to the least touch, and, if rudely struck, stirs up in Spanish bosoms little less vehemence and excitement than a direct insult. One of its worst features is to make no distinction between the spirit of

sober criticism and that of wilful depreciation; both are classed in the same category; and a citizen would hold himself to be no worthy "hijo" of his pueblo, if he did not resent an observation upon the defective architecture of its church steeple as readily as a sneer at the poverty of its population. I was not, therefore, surprised at this indignant burst of my mozo, for I had seen men of the higher classes, and of cultivated minds, wince under the most guarded and well-meant remarks regarding the condition of their native cities.

In front, and rather to the left, stretched a range of no great height: this was the Sierra de Cabra, or, more properly, Las Navas de Cabra. On its flank was situated the Sima de Cabra, one of the marvels of Andalucia, which popular tradition had invested with a mysterious interest, and made the scene of supernatural and fearful events. To this cave Cervantes alludes when he causes the Knight of the Wood to enumerate the arduous enterprises imposed on his valour by his cruel mistress; among which he was commanded "to plunge" headlong into the Sima de Cabra (an unheard-of and dreadful attempt), and to bring her a particular relation of what is locked up in that obscure abyss.

There was no want of life on the road, for at every turn we met droves of mules; their sleepy masters reeling on their saddles as the patient animals stopped cautiously in single file, and only unclosing their eyes to mutter a drowsy "Vaya usted con Dios, caballeros," when we passed. My own mozo was an "hijo de Baena," a "son of Baena," as the Spaniards poetically phrase it—a fact I discovered by unwittingly making an observation that hurt that blind attachment which every Spaniard bears to his native pueblo. "Are then," said I, "the innkeepers of Lucena as great rogues as those of Baena?"

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As the road to Lucena passed within a short distance of this wonderful cavity, I struck off in order to visit it; and having obtained the proper direction at a cortijo, proceeded to climb the hill by the path indicated. On the way, it became apparent that on these rocky and comparatively barren slopes greater pains were taken in cultivating the soil than on the richer plain below. All the loose stones were carefully collected into little mounds, in order that the plough might the more effectually perform its office; the crop, however, was scanty, and poorly rewarded the labours of the husbandman. After half an hour's climb up a gradual acclivity, we reached a spot where two perpendicular walls of rock rose up at the distance of a hundred yards from each other: between these lay a pass, that narrowed as it approached the mountain's summit, and at the highest point a dark shadow betrayed the object of our search. At the foot of a rugged cliff a yawning cavity was visible, the first glance at which revealed the true nature of a cavern, concerning whose origin legends innumerable had woven a tissue of fantastic incidents. It was the perpendicular shaft of a deserted mine, but by whom pierced and wrought, whether by Phoenicians, Cartha-

ginians, or Romans, history furnished no information. So singular a phenomenon, therefore, as a cavity of vast depth, yawning on the lonely mountain side, was well fitted to excite the terrors of the superstitious, and cause them to regard it as the work of magic, and the abode of unhallowed enchanters. The probability is, from the rounded form of the shaft, that it was the work of the Romans, who in mining preferred that shape, at least in Andalusia. They had carried their labours to a great depth: on dropping a pebble down, ten seconds elapsed ere it was heard to strike the bottom. About five or six yards below the surface there appeared openings in the sides, which appeared to be the entrances to horizontal galleries, necessary for the proper working of the veins.

The mystery which thus shrouded the place was heightened by many additions from popular superstition. From its mouth were said to issue infernal vapours, and at certain hours of the night flames and spectral forms were seen to hover above the dark abyss; and the shepherd, as he guarded his flocks, heard sounds coming from its depths like the wailing and groans of spirits in pain. But about the end of the seventeenth century there occurred a tragic

event that deepened the interest connected with the Sima, and was better calculated to awaken superstitious awe than the fabulous tales previously current. As the narrative of this event, though rather prolix, affords some insight into the judicial procedure of the times, I transcribe it at full length, from the Spanish periodical in which it appeared some years ago.

In the year 1683, Don Manuel Aguilera Tolodano, an inhabitant of Cabra, committed the crime of assassination by murdering Pedro de Ochoa, between whose spouse and Don Manuel a criminal intimacy existed. Aided by a friend and a servant, the assassin precipitated the corpse of Ochoa down the Sima de Cabra, where it was thought little likely that justice would seek for it. However, a rope stained with blood, that was found at its mouth, and the declaration of several herdsmen, directed the attention of the corregidor, Don Diego de Ojeda, to the spot, and in concert with the alguacil mayor of the town, he instituted the process from which the following details are extracted. After having ascertained that the Sima was 143 yards in depth, and nine in diameter at the surface, they constructed a machine over its mouth, provided with two ropes

and pulleys for making the descent, which was courageously undertaken by one Fernando Muñoz Romero, a stonecutter in the town. The process then relates how the corpse was discovered. "And after the above preparations were made, the said Fernando Muñoz Romero confessed himself to the P. Fr. Miguel Serrano, of the Order of San Francisco de Assiz, and after having received absolution, he came to the mouth of the Sima, where Melchor de Aguirre, the alguacil mayor, and other persons, had prepared a sling, in which he was seated, and by means of many thick cords and the end of the said rope, they bound him to it by the arms and breast very firmly; and having attached to the end of the other rope two lamps, each with four wicks, in presence of his worship, of many friars and clergymen, and of me, the said escribano, and of three hundred other persons, who had assembled to see what had never been told, they let go the said Fernando Munoz, and the rope to which was affixed the lighted lamps; and the aforesaid, with great courage, and singing, descended as they let out rope into the depths of the Sima. And at the end of half an hour there was heard a voice, apparently that of the said Fernando Munoz, which

cried, 'I have found him!' and afterwards, at the end of another interval of time, there was heard another cry, which said, 'Slacken the rope of the corpse;' and at the end of another long interval, there was heard another cry from the depth of the Sima (from which they came up as from a well), which said, 'Haul!' And six men having pulled at the ropes, there appeared a bundle first, and behind it Fernando Muñoz Romero, with the lamps in one hand. And being landed, all the bystanders, along with his worship, received him with great joy; and the bundle being in the same manner landed, it was found to be a dead body, enveloped in a cloak of black and white serge, and bound with cords of esparto."

The corpse being identified as that of Ochoa, then follows the declaration of the adventurous discoverer.

"The said Fernando Muñoz Romero being sworn, said that he entered the Sima, and by the light of the two lamps he carried, proceeded to examine the walls of the Sima; and in four or five places on either side descried hollows like caves, more long than broad, very spacious, and that the end of them could not be ascertained; and that for

a considerable space the walls are of smooth stone; and before reaching the depths the Sima enlarges and widens; and about four fathoms from the bottom, on the right-hand, were some fissures, very beautiful, and apparently wrought artificially; from these trickled drops of very thick and cold water. And having reached the lowest part of the Sima, he rested upon a heap of earth and large stones; and having surveyed the place, he found it was round, and as large as the interior of the church of San Dominico of Cabra. That the sides were very smooth, nor was any apartment or opening visible in them, nor any cavity in the floor by which he might descend further; and having examined all around him, he beheld at the foot of the heap of stones a bundle, and approaching with the light, discovered it to be a corpse, lying with the face downward; and having recognised it, he cried aloud, 'I have found him.' And upon this he endeavoured to carry the body of the deceased to the top of the said heap of stones, and laying hold of it, and using all his force, he could not raise it from the ground; and then invoking the sweet name of Our Lady of the Sierra, it appeared to him that immediately he was aided in raising it: whereupon he shouted to 'slacken

the rope of the corpse,' the which having carried to the top of the heap of stones, he firmly secured to the end of the rope, and then cried 'Haul!' And furthermore, the deponent declares that the said Sima descends perpendicularly to the bottom, since on arriving there he saw and distinguished the people who looked over its mouth."

A description so minute as the above leaves little to be discovered by future explorers, if any shall be found desirous of winning the fame which, in Andalusia, they would be certain to reap by the descent of this well-known wonder. That it is the work of man, and not a freak of nature, is conspicuously evident; and the openings in the sides, noted by Romero, indicating the entrance into passages or galleries, such as are found in all mines, sufficiently prove that it belonged to that class of excavations, and was not a well or cistern, as is maintained by the writer who transmitted the relation I have quoted. For the latter conjecture there is no other foundation than the deceptive one of a certain resemblance to a well; while at the same time we are not informed for what object a reservoir of water was formed here, where there are no habitations, and where the remains of none exist;

nor why the well was constructed near the summit of the mountain—the very worst locality for such a purpose, as is testified by the total absence of water in its depths; nor, moreover, for what reason the diameter was so unusually great as 27 feet, when a third of that width might have answered the purpose. In short, to the solution of this ingenious writer there are as many objections as to the assertion of my mozo, who, after gazing down the abyss with looks of horror and astonishment, exclaimed at last, “Parece la boca de un infierno!”

Resuming our route, we descended the hill by a rough track, upon which the mule ridden by the mozo tripped and fell no less than four times; and skirting the foot, which was clothed by a continuous growth of olives and fruit-trees, fell into the path that led to Lucena. It wound in a southerly direction, through groves alternating with fields of grain; and with few intervals, such were the characteristics of the country up to the gates of that town. In England, out of those materials, shady groves and waving fields, are formed those scenes that painters love to transfer to canvass, and admiring eyes to look upon; but though the same elements are to be found in Andalusia, the reader

must guard against giving them the vivid*colouring and picturesque grouping that so signally characterise the landscapes of our native land. Here there is a total want of the bright verdure that beams under an English sky, and in its place a sickly hue clouds every leaf and blade of grass. A grove, especially an olive one, is a thin growth of low trees, the stems of which are hewn down into mutilated stumps, bearing a few slender boughs covered with a scanty foliage of sombre aspect. A corn-field is a vast tract of hundreds or thousands of acres, divided only by the tracks that traverse it. Overhead a fierce sun rides in a shadowless sky, and pours a hot and dazzling glare upon the cracked and parched soil; the brooks are dried up, the pasturage is sapless and withered, while an unbroken silence everywhere reigns. Such is a landscape among the campinas of Andalucia when the harvest season has advanced.

In despite, however, of its barrenness in natural beauty, one regarded the scenery with deep interest, for history told that upon these sunburnt slopes and scorched plains high and gallant deeds had been done; and one felt that every knoll and level must have witnessed the triumphs or the fall of chivalrous

foemen. *Baena, Cabra, and Lucena, the nearest of the towns held by Christians to the western frontier of the kingdom of Granada, were necessarily those upon which the M̄oorish arms surged when the tide of war set in that direction. Every house, therefore, was provided with its lance and buckler; every inhabitant was a warrior, ready to sally forth when the trumpet sounded for a foray across the border, or to man the walls against some sudden incursion of his revengeful adversaries. It mattered little to these warlike communities whether or no their monarch might be at peace with their Moslem neighbours; truces and alliances brought no rest to them, for, by a singular stipulation inserted in all treaties between the Moors and Christians, it was agreed that during the cessation of general hostilities, inroads might be made upon the territories of each, provided these did not last longer than three days, and were conducted without a display of pennons or banners. Hence the district around was year after year the theatre of stirring warfare, and every summer saw armed parties setting forth upon plundering expeditions, or returning encumbered with spoil; while fierce skirmishes between them and their pursuers marked their progress, and

conferred celebrity upon localities otherwise devoid of interest.

The most noted event, however, connected with the border history of these three towns, was the defeat and capture of Boabdil el Chico, the last king of Granada, by a bold attack of their garrisons and townsmen. That "unlucky" monarch, as he is styled by the Moorish chroniclers, in the hope of winning renown by some signal feat of arms, suddenly appeared one morning before the gates of Lucena, at the head of a numerous host. The brave alcaide, noways dismayed, though his garrison consisted only of a feeble band of foot and a few horsemen, contrived to amuse the enemy with negotiations for a surrender, while messengers were dispatched to rouse the surrounding country and fortresses, and bring assistance to his relief. Shortly after midday, the forces of Cabra and Baena were descried hastening to his aid. So imminent was his danger considered by these, that lord and vassal, citizen and peasant, appeared in warlike array, and now, under the command of Don Diego de Cordova, Count of Cabra, amounted to a body of 1200 foot soldiers, all brave and tried men: they were, moreover, accompanied by 250 cavaliers of the best

families in the towns. Before their arrival, the Moorish king had drawn off his forces from the assault, and sent them to the more congenial task of ravaging the surrounding country. Great was the disappointment of the gallant Count of Cabra on beholding no traces of the enemy, for he appears to have been the Hotspur of his day, and was the hero of many daring and some rash exploits; but being bent upon a passage of arms with the invaders, his scouts were sent out to discover their position: meanwhile, notwithstanding the great disparity of numbers, his little army was held in readiness for the encounter.

In a valley, between high hills, the Moorish host was espied, moving leisurely towards its own frontier, and guarding many prisoners, and beasts of burden laden with spoil. Such a position was as favourable for the onset of a small force as it was adverse to the movements of a large one; and perceiving their advantage, the Christians charged down from the heights upon the enemy below. At the first shock the ranks of the Moors were broken; and being, moreover, assailed on their flank by the alcaide of Luque, who came up with troops at that seasonable moment, their confusion increased, and in a short

time their whole array was in retreat. Thenceforward, for three leagues, the combat was only between the pursuers and the pursued, who failed not, however, to display many deeds of valour; being stimulated by the example of their king, who was always the last to retire before the advancing Christians.

At length they reached the rivulet of Mingonzales, then swollen by recent rains. Here the horse of the monarch failed him; and dismounting, he endeavoured to elude the pursuit by concealing himself among the shrubs and trees that lined the banks of the torrent. But his evil star prevailed; he was discovered and assailed by three soldiers of Lucena, to whom, perceiving the futility of resistance, he surrendered, and was conducted by them to their leader. Don Diego received his kingly prisoner with respect and courtesy, and without delay caused him to be conveyed to the Castle of Lucena. Thereafter the rout of the Moorish army was complete; the victorious Christians followed them up to the walls of Loxa, the aged and valiant alcaide of which fell on that disastrous day, and along with him 5000 of the invaders, among whom were many scions of the noblest houses in Granada.

Lucena in the present day is nothing more than the capital of an agricultural district, inhabited by a rural population and some families of provincial nobility. If it formerly boasted of monuments of art, there are none now to be seen; and its streets display the usual characteristics of Andalusian towns—an execrable pavement, gutters exhaling pestilential effluvia, and every alternate house in a dilapidated condition. It was the hour of siesta when I arrived, and of course the whole town was buried in slumber, and not a creature was stirring out of doors. About an hour before sunset, however, the sound of voices in the street announced that the diurnal repose was at an end; and, sallying forth, I proceeded to the dwelling of the comandante, to whom I bore a letter of introduction. In a few minutes more that courteous official had donned his evening costume, and was ready to show the way to the only relic of the past within the walls of the town. This was the castle of Lucena, as it is styled; but its right to that imposing title is very questionable, and elsewhere it would merely be termed a fortified house. Here was confined the unlucky Boabdil, after his capture by the Count of Cabra; and it was not fancy alone that traced in

the construction of the edifice a striking resemblance to a prison. When the beholder gazes upon a dark and gloomy pile, presenting everywhere breadths of dead wall broken only by a few loopholes or here and there a narrow window strongly grated, his first and natural impulse is to picture the interior a place of cells and dungeons, and to people them with captives, for every external feature bespeaks jealous precautions against escape. Such is the outward aspect of the castle of Lucena.

Our ramble terminated in the alameda—that focus of mirth, love-making, and intrigue, of flashing eyes and graceful forms, of nimble tongues, rattling fans, and cavaliers ‘*haciendo la rueda del pavo*’—the resort of well-clad poverty, and stomachs pinched to purchase a “*capa azul*.” Though small, this *al-fresco* place of assembly was superior to the general run of alamedas in the provincial towns. In the centre stood ranks of mulberry-trees, beneath whose shade its frequenters walked; while the sides were garnished with benches of stone, for the onlookers and the seniors of the place. As the light began to decline, groups strolled in from its various avenues and congregated in the centre walk; the feminine portion fanning themselves industriously,

and exclaiming occasionally, "Jesus! que calor!" while their masculine friends were puffing forth volumes of smoke, and anathematizing the heat in stronger language. Then, at some understood signal, the whole party put themselves in motion, and slowly paced up and down within the limits consecrated by usage to the evening paseo. By and bye the moon rose, and shone serenely upon the light-hearted throng, who presently proceeded to turn its clear light to good account; a guitar and violin struck up under the shadow of a tree; in a trice partners were selected, and forthwith a dozen couples commenced dancing to the monotonous music with due gravity. In Britain a quadrille is generally a solemn affair, but here it is far worse; not because the performers feel ill at ease during their saltatory exhibition, but from the circumstance that the variety of difficult passages, and shakes to which they condemn their lower members is such as can only be executed by means of much agility, and the utmost concentration of their faculties to that one purpose. Hence, no dancers upon the tight-rope can look more thoughtful and anxious than those in Spanish ball-rooms when a quadrille is in progress.

"Who is that caballero dancing with the Condesa de H——?" I inquired of the comandante.

"Un tendero," he replied.

"What! a shopkeeper?" I exclaimed, in some astonishment; "Does, then, the 'sangre azul' in Lucena usually associate with such?"

"Not so, Senor: this is somewhat like a public ball-room, where, as you know, any one is at liberty to claim the hand of a lady who may be disengaged; and if she be so, she cannot refuse to dance with him, but then the acquaintance terminates the moment the dance is over."

After an hour of this diversion, the circle dispersed, some homewards, some to tertulias; while, with a small party including three or four ladies, I repaired to a neveria, or shop where ices are dispensed, such establishments in Andalucia being generally managed by Valencians. These luxuries, so grateful in a warm climate, are obtained by means of snow, which is sometimes transported from a great distance on the backs of mules, to furnish the panting Andaluza with heladas or the cool agraz: in the present instance the article was supplied from the mountains of Ronda, and occasionally, when that source failed, from the Sierra Nevada. There

is a custom connected with such social parties peculiar, I believe, to Spain. It is usual for one of the party to pay for the rest: and as the doing so is somehow or other connected with a question of precedence, it frequently happens that disputes arise respecting the honour of being thus considered master of the feast; and these, though generally amicable, have sometimes ended in serious consequences. To the stranger, however, the custom is at first rather annoying; for not only is he excepted from all obligations of this kind, but he is not even expected to contribute his share of the reckoning when he happens to be in company with Spanish friends. Indeed, to do so would be considered by most of them as an affront, and an aspersion upon their hospitality. So far do some carry their "pundonor" upon this point, that he will occasionally find, on proceeding to discharge his bill at a café, should he have entered it alone, that the mozo has already received payment from some friend among the crowd.

On the following day I started at a late hour, preferring a night journey, with all its discomforts, to travelling exposed to a sun whose rays seemed tipped with fire. Granada, however, was the bourne: and

who would not suffer some hardships to reach that city of romance and Moorish chivalry? Our path lay through a cultivated country, and conducted us by the village of Araceli; but soon the short twilight of an Andalusian summer came to an end, and further observations were then only to be gathered through the sense of hearing. The tinkling of bells and the lowing of cattle denoted that we had entered on one of the vast pasturages frequently met with in Andalusia; by and bye the chimes of some church rang out on the left.

"These are the bells of Rute," said one of the muleteers; and as if their deep tones had awakened some hungry spirit within him, he bestirred himself in drawing forth from his wallet his frugal supper. It was a hermit's fare, consisting of raisins, walnuts, and bread; yet, with the courtesy of the country, neither he nor his brother mozo would partake of it until I had helped myself to a portion.

The repast ended, the twain proceeded to turn in for the night. This they accomplished by throwing themselves across their mules with their faces downwards, and balancing themselves so that their legs were a counterpoise to their heads, which hung within a foot of the ground. "There is a main

difference," said Sancho Panza, "between riding, and lying athwart like a sack of rubbish;" but my mozos knew of none: happy rogues! they slept for eight long hours without stirring from a posture that no other mortal could have maintained for as many minutes without falling a victim to a fit of apoplexy; and at the end of that time awoke as refreshed as if their rest had been taken on the softest couch. At last the long-wished-for moon rose, after a wearisome hour of silence and darkness; and her beams, falling on hill and valley, wrought a magical change on one's feelings. Thenceforward there was no sensation of weariness, for every turn of the path brought into view scenes and objects the effect of which was heightened tenfold by her light. Our route lay up the valley of the Genil, keeping rather to the range of mountains that formed its northern boundary than winding by the river's side. Such a track, therefore, was prolific in all those features that belong to a rugged country; sometimes breasting steep and rocky ascents, then winding by the base of cliffs, or keeping along the brow of ravines, wherein lay gathered deepest night; or, again, as the direction changed, disclosing glens, into whose depths the light shone full, and was reflected

by streams sparkling and quivering as they hurried over their rocky beds. These were for hours the sights that kept attention awake, till at length the moon sank beneath the horizon, and darkness again enveloped the prospect; then came the cold half-hour that announces the approach of dawn; and when day appeared we found ourselves descending to the banks of a stream by a hollow way between high cliffs. On the opposite side they rose stained of a deep red colour, and overhung an ancient mill, whose rude appearance was in perfect keeping with the character of its site, which was as wild and lonely as could be imagined. When, however, we had left this stream half a league behind us, and had been ferried across the sluggish waters of the Genil, the scenery, both around and in front, bore witness to the proximity of the Vega of Granada, upon which it bordered. The slopes became gentler, the valley, though still narrow, more cultivated; and vineyards clung to the sides of the hills, while the margin between their roots and the listless river was occupied by fields of yellow grain. Our path was, as usual in such a region, deep sunk between hedges of aloes, or the uncouth prickly pear, and a vehicle would have found much difficulty in traversing it;

yet this was the sole access to the vega from the west, had been the highway of generations for ages past, and was still as rude as when it bore Christian and Moor to battle. At length Loxa came in sight; our animals quickened their pace, and made their way without guidance to the inn, where, on the usual couch—a mattress laid on the floor—I betook myself to rest, at an hour when most people are quitting theirs.

The same evening we were passing up the Vega of Granada, our animals no longer slipping and scrambling among rocky passes, as had been their fate the preceding night, but soberly stepping along the level plain at an easy pace. What a transition from the iron-featured country of last night! We seemed now to be launched upon an inland sea of verdure; to the right and left the green expanse spread up to the rugged shores that encircled it, filling every indentation in their outline with verdure, surging with its waves of vegetation upon the bold promontories that came out into the plain, and then sweeping onwards towards the east in masses of luxuriance that ended only where a stupendous mountain-pile rose against the eastern horizon. This was the Sierra Nevada, towering

in majesty above every surrounding elevation, and in grandeur and desolation far surpassing the minor sierras, as well as in the loftiness of its dark peaks. The fertility of the soil was marvellous; and as we pursued our way among vegetation so exuberant as to realise all that one could conceive of tropical richness, it was easy to understand how this oasis of verdure seemed an earthly paradise of delights to the Moor, and why he clung so fondly to his beloved vega. From morning to night he might spur his Arab courser over its level surface, and find no spot unoccupied by plant or tree; groves of fruit-trees and oranges diversified the blooming garden, and threw over it the charm of perpetual summer; refreshing rills crossed it in a thousand channels; the air was perfumed with the breath of fragrant shrubs and flowers; and, as if to heighten the scene by contrast, and render his perception of its beauties more exquisite, he had only to raise his eyes to the environing wilderness of sierras to behold a spectacle of hopeless sterility.

All night long we continued to traverse, under the mild effulgence of the moon, the well-beaten track that led to the city; and when morning overtook us as we emerged from the town of Santa Fe,

I strained my vision to catch a glimpse of its walls, for I knew that they could not be far distant. I was directing my eyes along the plain without being successful in the search, when looking accidentally a little higher, I beheld a line of darkened walls and massive towers of the same hue, encircling the summit of a spur projecting from the sierra: this was the fortress of the Alhambra, and at the base of its precipitous sides a mingled mass of white walls, brown roofs, spires, domes, and foliage, marked the site of the city it protected. And now this stream we are crossing is the Genil, renowned in song; and soon we are passing along the narrow streets of the Moorish capital, amid gateways, horse-shoe arches, and a thousand vestiges of its ancient masters, till at length the Fonda de Comercio brings us to a stand. My alforjas are pitched on the ground, the muleteers dismissed, and, covered with dust, I follow a waiter to a chamber where in one corner there is an apology for a bed; and here I speedily forget the fatigues and aches inseparable from passing the watches of the night, as well as those of the morning, upon the back of a snail-paced mule.

CHAPTER VI.

GRANADA—THE ALHAMBRA—THE VEGA—DON E——.

IT was only on the following day that I visited the Alhambra. Awaking in the morning, refreshed and invigorated, I felt no longer “hecho pedazos,” as on the day before, and unfit for any undertaking more weighty than a stroll on the salon; but with nerves new strung, and spirits rising with the thought of realising many an ardent longing, I set out alone on my pilgrimage. And without somewhat of a pilgrim’s feelings one can scarcely look up to those sunburnt towers; for the Alhambra is to the traveller in Andalusia, what the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem is to the pilgrim—the climax of all that is interesting in the surrounding region. It is difficult, therefore, for him to approach it without feeling those quickened emotions that arise when we are on the eve of beholding an object that has long

occupied a large share of our thoughts and fancies. Wherever his wandering steps have turned, he has observed innumerable traces of a people whose works proclaim them to have been great; a people at once warlike and industrious, uniting with the virtues of a rude age the laborious spirit of modern communities, no less capable of conceiving than of executing grand projects; sumptuous in their tastes and pleasures, yet passionately fond of nature, and wonderfully ingenious in adapting the knowledge of their times to practical purposes and the uses of society. All this he reads in those memorials of their hands that still strew the surface of their lost dominions; and when History opens her volume, and tells him that they who entered the land as conquerors were not mere men of violence, but a polished and courteous people, excelling their contemporaries in many branches of science and learning, and, despite the operation of a false creed whose ruling principle was prejudice and bigotry, were chivalrous and gallant to their foes, his curiosity and interest are in no common degree aroused as he draws nigh to the proudest monuments of their varied powers they have bequeathed to time. The citadel of their most renowned monarchy, the scene

of their last struggles and expiring glories, the seat of the highest triumphs of their art, are now to be revealed to him. All these reflections bring with them a crowd of sensations that send him, in a state of excited feeling to which perhaps he has been long a stranger, to gaze upon the wonders of the Alhambra.

After traversing some ancient streets, I entered a large square, surrounded by lofty houses of Moorish aspect; it was the Bibarrambla, celebrated in many a ballad as the place where the Moorish chivalry held their jousts and tournaments, and hurled the jereed at each other in sport, or engaged in the more perilous pastime of the bull-fight. A dark street opens into it, whose name is familiar as a household word; it is the Zacatin, once filled with the richest merchandise of the East and southern Spain, and alive with crowds of turbaned merchants. Then we pass into the Plaza Nueva, and taking advantage of the open space to look around, the eye is at once arrested by the massive proportions of that tower that rises grim and rampant from its elevated site, and looks down frowningly upon the city at its feet. This is the Tower of the Bell, and one of the bulwarks of the Alhambra. And now, having

climbed the steep street of the Gomeles, we enter by a gateway a "bosky dell," diversified with walks and fountains, and overhung on the left by the swarthy walls of the fortress. Turning up one of these paths, we stand before its chief entrance, the spacious Gate of Justice. Upon the key-stone of its horse-shoe arch is sculptured, in relief, an open hand, emblematical of the all-creative power of the Deity whom the Mussulman worshipped; and passing through the archway, which serves as a guard-room for a few superannuated veterans, we ascend between high and blank walls to an esplanade, bounded by edifices of various ages and architecture. The observer now surveys on all sides the fortifications of an ancient citadel—gigantic square towers, gloomy walls, massive gateways; and perceives that his preconceived notions regarding the Alhambra have led him astray as to its real character. Properly speaking, it is a fortress, embracing within its red walls the whole summit of the spur on which it is situated: within lies a hamlet, provided with its church, convent, alameda, and all other essentials of a village; mingled with these are ancient Moorish dwellings, the unfinished palace of Charles V., and an edifice lowly and unpretending in its exterior, but whose

riches of internal splendour defy description—the far-famed palace of the Moorish monarchs.

From the Tower of the Bell, which, as I have mentioned, overlooks the city, the eye ranges over a panorama unrivalled in the vastness of its extent, the variety of objects it embraces, and in the contrast of colours that clothe its surface. Tawny mountains swell up against the horizon in all directions, broken and tumultuous as the waves of a stormy sea; within their wild outlines lies the vega, smooth and placid as a land-locked haven; here and there its surface is chequered by the yellow tints of harvest, or the whitened walls of villages or towns, but the groundwork is that verdure which, amid the glare of other colours and a glowing sky, is as refreshing to vision as the cup of cold water to parched lips. Dazzled and confused by other objects, the eye finds in it a place of rest; and after dwelling on it with delight, returns with renewed strength to trace out the other features of the prospect.

Looking directly downwards, the city comes into view. No map could give a better insight into its position and arrangement than a glance from this lofty tower, which, from the peculiarity of its situation, commands nearly the whole mass of dwellings

below. It rises on the extreme point of the spur occupied by the Alhambra; and as the latter is many hundred feet above the city, no better post could be found for observing how street and square are spread out. On either hand is visible an elevation that runs out from the sierra and forms a ridge, like that on which the Alhambra stands, but far less bold and aspiring. That to the right is the Albaycin, renowned in the latter days of Moorish Granada as the quarter of the city where Boabdil the Unlucky fortified and maintained himself during his contest with his father. Between it and the Alhambra lies a deep ravine, at the bottom of which runs the Darro; and from the bed of the river the houses rise roof above roof, mingled in picturesque confusion with gardens and foliage, till they surmount the crest of the ridge and spread over its exterior slope. On the corresponding height to the left, which is neither so considerable nor so noted as the Albaycin, are seen the Torres Bermejas, or red towers, which claim a remote antiquity: in the space between these elevations the mass of the city may be said to be. Its extremities, however, do not terminate at the base of each height, but on the one hand extend irregularly round the Torres Bermejas,

interspersed with groves and terraces; and on the other clothe, as I have remarked, the slopes of the Albaycin, and climb the narrow valley of the Darro.

Looking towards the sierra, in order to do which it is necessary to turn one's back to the city, the prospect embraces, besides the fortifications and dwellings of the Alhambra in the foreground, all that is most characteristic of Andalusian mountain scenery. Immediately in front are the wooded slopes in which the Generalife stands embosomed; to the left and higher up, the deep glen through which the Darro descends; on the verge of its precipitous banks hang white edifices surrounded with groves, and from thence the acclivities swell upwards in naked and barren loneliness, unbroken by crag or cliff or a single feature of interest.

Looking towards the right, the eye passes over the leafy hollow that conducts to the Gate of Justice, and rests upon the towering peaks of the Sierra Nevada. Language would convey but a faint conception of the sublimity of the prospect there unfolded. Soaring to the highest altitude of European chains, rose a magnificent mountain-range, carved as it were out of ebony, and wrapped

in eternal shadows. Its enormous range, every variety of fantastic peaks, and stretched away to the southward, in grandeur. In the midst of this mighty range stood the monarchs of the scene, the Picacho de Veleta and Mulanacen, towering like Titans, a growth of giants. Their lofty sides, cloven by tremendous chasms, and surrounded by steep, seemed to forbid a resting-place to the foot, and to deny access to their summits, which shot upwards dark and sullen. From these had disappeared their wintry hoods of snow, and each pinnacle lifted its head blackened like all below by the wrath of tempests and the fire of unnumbered summers. One vestige of winter alone remained on the forehead of the Picacho, where, sheltered in a deep ravine, a snow-wreath lingered, and reflected in dazzling brightness the sunbeams as they crossed its surface. This solitary speck of white was the last trace of the snowy mantle the peaks assume in winter; as summer advances, they shake it off from their crests and flanks, which then re-appear in the drapery of dark colours natural to their rugged outlines.

Descending from the tower, I sought my way to

the palace of the Alhambra, and found admittance. To come fresh from contemplating the savage grandeur of nature, was to put the feeble works of man to the severest test to which they could be subjected; yet, making due allowances, the founders of that pile might freely boast of the work of their hands. It is not my intention to describe a structure with which the public are well acquainted by the productions of abler pens than mine; it is enough to say that words fail to give any idea of its bewildering effect upon the senses. It is the *beau ideal* of a voluptuous Elysium; a scene to which every source of earthly enjoyment is summoned, and not in vain, to captivate and enthral the heart by lulling and soothing it to rest. And in a climate where inaction is frequently compulsory, and at times a necessity, how exquisitely adapted were those allurements that delight the stranger's eye, to banish the care and thought inseparable from our hours of tranquillity! The Albaycin might be in open rebellion, the Christian might be wasting the beautiful vega with fire and sword, the alcaides of the kingdom might be usurping the royal authority; but what were these disasters to him who could wander from marble hall to bloom-

ing garden, and surrender himself to the enchantment created by their vivid play of colours and the exquisite variety of their embellishments; or, pillowed on luxurious ease, and fanned by the perfume of the orange-flower, sink into forgetfulness while the murmur of fountains fell pleasantly on the ear? The great charm, indeed, of the palace lies in its tendency to absorb the mind in dreamy contemplation. Everything ministers to that end: the long colonnades of slender pillars that hang like stalactites round the courts; the dim twilight of the lofty saloons; the delicate fretwork embossed upon their walls, and provoking the eye to unravel its mazes; the splash of fountains "singing a quiet tune;" all these produce that mixture of illusion and reality which transports the thoughts into the world of reveries and day-dreams. And if such be the effect of the scene shorn as it is of its ancient splendours, how much more powerful must its charms have been when there mingled with them the still-life that peoples an Eastern court; when the chivalry of the kingdom filled the antechambers, and mute attendants glided to and fro through the deserted walks, and the voice and

smile of beauty were breathing their soft spells around!

Is it to be wondered at that each scion of royal blood counted this the summit of his desires; that he broke every tie of kindred, allegiance, or gratitude, to make it his own; and that when he attained it with hands stained with blood, he forgot, as with few exceptions did the later monarchs of Granada, in the baleful attractions of his palace, that his dominions were torn by misrule and dissension, and, slowly but surely, sinking beneath the arms of the Christians? It can hardly be doubted that the Alhambra contributed no little to the downfall of the Moslem kingdom: no man can behold its varied delights without confessing that they must have shed an enervating and deadening influence upon all within their sphere, and, however sparingly enjoyed, have been fatal to spirit and energy.

One of my first occupations was to procure apartments, not in this royal residence, for it is now forbidden to devote them to the accommodation of private individuals, but in one of the dwellings within the walls of the fortress. This was no difficult matter, as there are several houses of the

description I required within its precincts; and on the following day I found myself installed in one—the property, by the way, of an English baronet, and situated close to the Arco del Vino. Its erection was probably coeval with the days of the Moors; but time, or the taste of subsequent occupants, had stripped it of every peculiarity of their architecture, except the small Moorish casements of the upper story. Here I lodged in a spacious apartment that overlooked the interior of the fortress; and every morning sallied forth to wander, with no definite object in view, among the existing memorials of its Moslem masters; sometimes from a high battlement watching the flight of morning from the east, to see it light upon the city below and steal along the plain; or descending by the northern gate to the Albaycin, roam through that ancient stronghold of turbulence; or turning up the course of the Darro, pursue the path to the secluded colle of Monte Santo. During the noontide heat, when occupation out of doors is necessarily suspended, and one is confined a close prisoner to the house, I had a never-failing resource against ennui in beholding from one of the windows a magnificent prospect of the Vega and the Sierra

Nevada. The enchanting verdure of the former never palled upon the eye: not ~~but~~ those who have dwelt under cloudless skies, and exposed to the full force of an unshadowed sun, can understand how often the exercise of vision becomes under the glare of light physically painful, and how much to be appreciated is a spot of green upon which the sight may rest. Here, while the air was quivering with heat, and nearer objects appeared to glow, there was a broad expanse that reflected no dazzling sunbeams, and permitted the eye to dwell long upon its shady masses of verdure. And while a breathless stillness reigned around, and the ~~land~~ was wrapped in the silence of the grave, bespeaking, like the rocky and desolate mountain-chains in the distance, the exhaustion of nature, how cheering was it to behold a prospect wherein nothing drooped, and where stalk and leaf were flourishing in the utmost vigour of vegetable life! Indeed, the luxuriance of the Vega seemed almost the ~~work~~ of magic, so far was it from being affected by the burning and blighting influence which in every other direction had reduced the soil to sterility, and thrown a brown and arid tinge upon mountain and valley. Then at sunset I descended the Calle de

los Gomeles, sure to find the streets alive with population, for the disappearance of the sun is the signal for all who can walk or crawl to emerge from house and cottage and enjoy the freshness of evening. In general the lower orders sat with their families at the doors of their dwellings, the men smoking their papelitos, and the whole circle watching the beau monde wending its way to the alameda. A stranger, however closely he may conform to the costume of the country, is quickly detected, and one hears the word "Ingles" pass from mouth to mouth on nearing these groups. This is their mode of *tomando el fresco*; that of the higher ranks again is only a shade less sedentary, its desires being bounded by the limits of the public paseo, beyond which the señoritas and their cavaliers scrupulously refrain from passing. From thence, the promenaders retire to the various cafés and neverias, to sip ices or the delicious *agraz*, and afterwards to fill the tertulias to which they may have the right of admission. One drawback only accompanies a residence in the Alhambra. As it is a fortress, and provided with a slender garrison, the routine of military discipline is accordingly enforced, and at ten o'clock at night the gates are

closed. After this hour admission is difficult—I do not say impossible, for these ancient gates will readily unclose to a silver key if judiciously applied; but the difficulty consists in rousing the warders, who, being superannuated soldiers, are either too sleepy or too deaf to heed any but the loudest knockings and assaults upon their venerable charge. This inconvenience excepted, I do not know a more delightful quarter in Granada than the castle of its former lords. Here the traces of innovating hands are less perceptible than in the city below; and one finds no difficulty in forming a pretty accurate notion of what was its strength and grandeur under the Moorish domination. Besides this, there are varied and extensive prospects to be enjoyed from its massive towers; the most noted of other Moorish monuments are close at hand; and, last but not least, one is spared the fatigue of climbing the steep approach from the city, an undertaking of no small moment and toil under an almost vertical sun.

One of the pleasures to which I had looked forward on approaching Granada was the prospect of conversing with some of my countrymen, whom I made sure of meeting there; for after some

months' abstinence I felt a decided longing to hear myself talk in my mother tongue. It is true I laboured under no apprehensions of having forgotten it, having had proof to that effect in Cordova, where, on rescuing two English tourists from a dilemma brought on by their own ignorance of Spanish, I had the gratification of hearing one marvel to the other, "How well the —— Spaniard spoke English!" My sage compatriots jumped to the conclusion that he who wore a sombrero, chaqueta, and a faja girded round him, must perforce be a native of Spain; whereas the youngest urchins on the streets eyed one with a look expressive of their having discovered that the wearer of their national costume was no "viejo Christiano," but a stranger from a distant land. It was therefore with considerable satisfaction that, one morning, on calling upon an ex-alcalde of the city, I bowed to a personage whom the worthy dignitary presented as Don E——, and a countryman. The appearance of my new acquaintance was one of those which, once seen, are not soon forgotten. I recognised him immediately, although the only occasion on which I had seen him occurred many months previously, and then only for a few minutes. Having

entered a bookseller's shop in Seville in quest of a work, I found the master of the shop seated at a chess-table along with the individual who now stood before me. My inquiry was unsatisfactory; but during our brief colloquy, I caught a glimpse of certain features in the background that struck me as being strangely and whimsically put together. The countenance was sallow, very angular in its outlines, and deeply marked by small-pox; while from behind a pair of spectacles a couple of lynx-like eyes shot searching glances. Let the reader place this singular visage upon the most meagre and slender form he has ever beheld, and he has a pretty accurate description of Don E——'s outward man. Further acquaintance, which he was not slow to cultivate, brought to light his various accomplishments. Among these it was a singularity, that although professing to be exclusively a military character, he possessed a more than respectable knowledge of medicine. He was, besides, a perfect master of Spanish, which he wrote and spoke admirably; and was endowed with the gift of conversation in an eminent degree. So much for the bright side of Don E——'s character. In regard to the dark portion, truth compels me to

state that a great deal more might be said. In the first place, a more wandering tongue it had never been my lot to meet. Its audacity exceeded belief. Mention the name of a public character or a personage of distinction, and it immediately proclaimed its owner to have been on intimate terms with the exalted individuals. Whether they were statesmen, orators, nobles, poets, or actors, mattered little to Don E——; to all and each he had borne company, and could pour forth, off-hand, a host of anecdotes to prove his intimacy with them. To this weakness he added another of a less diverting kind. He had an unpleasant habit of borrowing money on the strength of remittances expected, but which somehow or other never arrived; and, in short, Don E—— lived upon his wits and his friends. To the credit of his Spanish ones be it spoken, they bore this failing with a grace which, if it be characteristic of the nation, must make it the admiration of all *chevaliers d'industrie*.

The most curious fact connected with this individual was the mystery that enveloped his origin and the country of his birth. His own account, of course, was not to be credited; and all the other indications that might furnish a clue were

wholly at fault. His name was Scotch, his accent English, while the frequent use of Irish idioms bespoke him to have resided long in the Emerald Isle. This much, however, of his history was authentic: that he was engaged in the British Legion—in what capacity it is doubtful—and left that service for reasons best known to himself; subsequently entered the Spanish army, and held the rank of sous-lieutenant, which he also resigned for private reasons; and had since then been roaming through Spain, with no ostensible purpose or employment. During his service in the Legion he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner by the Carlists, of whose brutalities to himself, and others as unfortunately situated, he was in the habit of communicating shocking details. To this story I had always turned an incredulous ear, thinking it a fiction, like many others, until, on returning to England, I read the narrative of an officer of the British Marines who happened to be made a prisoner by the Carlists. From this I learnt that Don E—— had actually been captured, and that this part of the story was no fabrication.

Every day that I climbed the steep Calle de los Gomeles, under a hot and fierce sun, my eyes

turned instinctively to the dark summit of the Picacho de la Veleta, from whose brow there hung, like a jewel, the snowy speck I have already described. It was peculiarly tantalising, while oppressed by the stifling atmosphere of the street, to look up to its glittering surface, and know it was the centre of cool breezes, the faintest breath from which would have banished every sensation of languor, and sent one up the steep with the step of a mountaineer. As, however, these cool airs refused to quit their ancient seat on the mountain-top even for a moment, there was no other resource than to seek them there, and for once inhale a reviving draught in the midst of a torrid land. This project I had been prevented by various causes from putting into execution until I had become acquainted with Don E——. No sooner did that personage hear of my determination than he bestirred himself to aid it, and proved, indeed, a useful auxiliary. Nobody knew better than he where the best guide and the best mules were to be procured; and having laid in a store of provender for the expedition, we commenced our journey in the afternoon of a hot and cloudless day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PICACHO DE LA VELETA—ASCENT OF IT—GALE AMONG THE
MOUNTAINS—MAGNIFICENT PROSPECT FROM THE SUMMIT—
LA ZUBIA—THE RESTLESS SKULL—THE NUNS—ROUTE TO
MALAGA—A GALERA—THE SPANISH MASTIFF—GUARDAS DEL
CAMINO.

As the Picacho is accessible by a bridle-track to within half a mile of its summit, the plan of the ascent was to proceed to the station of the neveros, near the snowy wreath from which they filled their panniers; having reached this, which we expected to do shortly after sunset, we were to spend the night there, and on the following morning, at earliest dawn, to commence the ascent of the loftiest peak. It was absolutely essential, in order to enjoy an uninterrupted prospect from the summit, that we should reach it at an early hour, for at midday, and even sooner, the surface of the country would be shrouded from view by the exhalations that rise

from the valleys and plains, and diffuse themselves through the atmosphere. Considering, however, that only half a mile of the ascent remained to be performed on foot after starting from our resting-place, we reckoned with certainty upon accomplishing the distance in little more than an hour.

A short ride from the outskirts of the city brought us to the swelling roots of the mighty sierra, which from this point gradually sloped upwards for more than twenty miles, till it attained its highest elevation. Here, on leaving the fertile vega, there was no imperceptible transition from the prodigal abundance of a rich plain into the less fruitful cultivation of mountain acclivities. Sterility encompassed us from the moment our animals began to breast the rocky pathway; and looking upwards, the scenery wore the same aspect, impressed in bolder characters: dark, lowering crags, shivered peaks, and stony ranges pierced by gaps and ravines, denoted a region abandoned to desolation. Still it had its green spots: as our track generally led along the crest of elevated ridges, the eye from this vantage ground commanded the interior of the valleys on either side, and occasionally penetrated into the depths of others more remote. Some were beauti-

fully green, and possessed their foaming brooks, along whose banks a few tall poplars were picturesquely sprinkled; one or two, again, were diversified by mountain hamlets, whose appearance in the heart of this rocky wilderness presented a picture of industry and content joined to an air of utter seclusion. A few houses grouped irregularly together—the church or ermita at one end, some straggling huts perched upon projecting crags, a thread of verdure stealing down the valley—these constituted a picture of peace, silence, and perhaps happiness, the effect of which, surrounded by its dusky frame of frowning ridges, was indescribably striking. At every step, however, that carried us upwards, such glimpses became less frequent, and for leagues we continued to toil among the wildest mountain scenery it is possible to conceive. The twilight of the southern skies then drew abruptly to a close; and while the failing light rendered our progress along the rugged track more than ordinarily slow, the wind began to rise, or, to speak more correctly, we began to ascend into a region where for the time being it was holding its boisterous revels. On the summits of the unsheltered ridges, and in the narrow gorges between them, the gusts

blew furiously, and withal roared so loud as to drown our voices even when we shouted to each other. At one precipitous slope, which scarcely afforded footing for our mules, the "burro" that carried our load of provender made a false step, and stumbled. Before it could recover itself a sudden blast poured down from the heights, and in an instant the poor animal was overpowered, and hurled on its side with a crash that boded havoc to our stock of edibles. Luckily the mozo held on stoutly by the halter, and succeeded in keeping its head to wind; and then the rest of us scrambling down to where it lay helpless and passive, raised it by main force, and pushed it up the ascent. This caused some delay, and when success had crowned our exertions the last traces of light had disappeared; notwithstanding the darkness, however, we struggled onwards, sometimes in sheltered nooks making good progress, but on the bleak ridges engaged in a stubborn contest with the wind, that threatened to launch us over the precipices that dropped away on either side. At length, when we were about to choose a place of bivouac for the night, as further progress on the verge of chasms was becoming a work of danger, on turning an

angle of a rock Juanico descried a faint light; this he pronounced to proceed from the station of the neveros. The sight was peculiarly welcome, as, in addition to the difficulties of the path, the wind blew keenly, and we were both wearied and cold: pushing on, therefore, at a brisker pace, we arrived within a short distance of the spot where the light had been seen. The track, however, instead of leading direct to it, seemed to proceed along the ridge on which we stood, and showed no indications of turning down into the hollow, at the bottom of which, and some distance to the left, was burning the fire that first attracted our notice. Unable to find a way, we shouted out for directions to guide us down the slope, the surface of which, one could plainly discern, was covered with huge blocks of stone. For some minutes the call was unanswered by those whom we supposed to be in charge of the station; at length a blaze of light burst forth from the spot, and illuminated a wide circle around it. The effect, under the circumstances, was peculiarly fine: in the centre was a dark figure, holding up the flaming brand, from which the wind carried a long train of sparks; behind him the mountain remained in undisturbed gloom, while the rude masses of

rock in front cast strange shadows towards us; then the light sank with the same suddenness with which it appeared, and left the scene apparently involved in thicker darkness.

Our arrival was the cause of no slight astonishment to the solitary individual in possession of the fire: the sight of travellers was to him a rare event, as few but neveros ever pay these regions a visit; and when strangers did make their appearance, it was usually during the hours of light. He did his best, however, to make us comfortable, and placed his house at our disposal—if indeed that could be called a house which boasted of the skies for a roof, and consisted merely of a low wall encircling a fire placed on the ground. Round the interior ran a sort of divan, constructed of earth and sharp pointed stones, which served as a sleeping place at night. Upon this, wrapped in my manta, and with a huge water-melon for a pillow, I stretched myself, and speedily forgot in slumber the fatigues of the day. During the night I awoke several times, to hear the wind howling fearfully around the nearest summits. As one or two cold blasts swept into our sheltered hollow, scattering the embers of the fire, and, in spite of cloaks and wrappings, sending a freezing

chill into one's bones, I learnt to appreciate the advantages of a roof; and certain opinions I expressed on a former occasion, respecting the pleasures of spending a night under the canopy of heaven, underwent a decided change. When morning broke, the gale had increased to a hurricane. Its fury, only partially felt in the narrow ravine in which we lay, was plainly visible upon the exposed flanks of the surrounding ridges; such shrubs as found a footing on the rocky surfaces were seen to be bent flat to the ground, and from time to time large stones dislodged by the wind came rolling down the acclivities. In such weather it would have been dangerous to have mounted the Picacho, upon whose sides the wind beat with unbroken force—to say nothing of the extreme probability that, on reaching the summit, the prospect would be obscured by clouds and mists from the disturbed waters of the Mediterranean. My determination, therefore, was to wait until the gale showed some signs of abating, before I ventured higher up; and if it did not lull before the following day, then at all hazards to make the attempt rather than return *re infectâ*. The next question was how to beguile this interval of doubtful duration; for although the

novelty of spending a day at an altitude of ten thousand feet above the sea was sufficiently pleasing, it required something more than this to prevent the hours from hanging heavy on our hands in the midst of the dreary scenery that encircled our retreat. Fortunately, the day previous I had received a packet of newspapers; and not having leisure to read them then, had brought them with me, in the expectation of finding some unoccupied moments for glancing at their contents. Now they served us in good stead, particularly as the nevero conducted us to an abode where we might read in positive comfort. The evening before, he had informed us that there was a "cueva" near, which was at our service, should we prefer passing the night there rather than in the open air. The word "cueva," however, which signifies a "cave," suggested the image of some "antre vast," dripping with icy dews; and under this impression we retained our positions by the fire-place, as being preferable to the damp couch that such an asylum promised. Now, however, it appeared that the "cueva" was the work of man, instead of a natural excavation in the mountain side; it was a construction resembling in form a huge beehive, and was situated in the ravine about

fifty yards from our resting-place. A rude mass it was of stones and clay, only distinguishable from the blocks around by the rounded shape given it by its builders: in that point as well as in the nature of the entrance they seemed to have imitated the architecture of the industrious insects I have named, for admittance was only to be effected by crawling on hands and knees through an aperture left on one side. Here, reclining luxuriously on the straw with which the floor was covered, we listened with unconcern to the roaring of the blast, and could have defied the pelting of the storm had it come, for the place was perfectly water-tight. Moreover there were within our citadel no internal foes to peace; at that great elevation the insect plagues of Spain cease to exist, or at all events to molest; and thus it falls to my lot to boast of an event which it would be difficult for many natives or strangers to parallel—viz., that I spent a whole day in Spain unmolested by the assault either of pulga or chinche. It was a day to be noted with a white mark.

Towards evening the violence of the wind subsided a little; and hailing this as a favourable omen, I resolved to move higher up the mountain to

another hut, which the neveros had constructed for their convenience. My determination was sincerely regretted by our friend of the cueva, who, as I had allowed him unrestricted access to the store of provender, had spent half the day in frying rashers of bacon, and was exceedingly loth to desist from so agreeable an occupation. He readily, however, pointed out the track, which first crossed a ravine filled with snow, and from which the neveros filled their panniers, and then led up by a small rill fed by the melting of the snows higher up. Its banks were carpeted with a narrow margin of pale green sward, but, this excepted, no other trace of vegetation diversified the surface of brown rock that everywhere met the eye; it elevated itself around us sometimes into precipitous crags, but oftener into heaps of stony masses resembling gigantic walls overthrown and crumbling into ruins. At the head of a ravine we found the resting-place of which we were in quest. This was merely an overhanging ledge of rock, before which the neveros had raised a wall of loose stones; but, such as it was, its shelter was eagerly accepted, as the cold after nightfall was such that our warmest coverings excluded it with difficulty. Daylight was,

therefore, a signal that brought the whole party with wonderful alacrity to their feet, or rather knees, for only by such a mode of progression was the exit from our den to be made. Juanico then kindled a fire and prepared "something hot" for breakfast, while we endeavoured by brisk motion to restore some animation to our limbs, cramped and chilled by contact with the rocky and uneven floor upon which we had passed the night. Looking upwards to the Picacho, the ascent seemed devoid of dangerous obstacles; there were no yawning chasms to skirt, nor did I perceive a single ravine intervening between its towering summit and the spot where I stood; all was an uninterrupted rise, characterised by the usual feature of becoming more steep and precipitous at the highest point of elevation. Setting out in advance, I followed a track worn by the neveros, which, after ascending among massive fragments of rock for a quarter of a mile, was lost beneath a field of snow that spread round the base of the loftiest pinnacle that remained to be surmounted.

A little to the left there appeared some traces of a track; and pursuing this, which skirted the snowy field I have described, I found it led along the brow

of a precipice, presenting a clear drop of several hundred feet. On the summit of this ran a narrow terrace, bounded on the right hand by a perpendicular wall of prodigious height, while the limited space between this and the abyss on the left was diminished one-half by a high bank of snow. This the breath of summer had melted in such a way that it overhung its base, and formed a half arch over one's head. For this reason it was necessary to proceed warily, lest by the displacement of a stone, or by a sound louder than usual, I should bring down the glittering roof as I passed under it, and be hurled along with the avalanche into the gulf below. In other respects, although the ground underfoot was moist and slippery from the melting of the snow, and sloped towards the precipice more decidedly than was agreeable, there were no dangers which ordinary caution could not obviate. It was only at one or two points, where projecting buttresses from the wall narrowed the pathway to a ledge scarcely a foot in breadth, that one felt inclined to hold one's breath, for at these spots a slip or false step would have been destruction. After proceeding thus cautiously for a hundred yards, I discovered that my labour had been in vain; the

ledge terminated in a natural ladder of rock, that descended by break-neck steps to the rocky depths far below. I was, however, far from regretting this unforeseen termination to the route I had chosen, for it had conducted me to a position where a spectacle of unequalled grandeur burst upon the sight. In front rose a semicircular precipice to the height of many hundred feet, being, in fact, a continuation of the wall of rock on my right, which now swept round with a noble curve to the left. Everywhere its sides were as perpendicular as if the plumb-line had been applied to them; and the foundations were hidden in an enormous mass of snow, whose unsullied purity contrasted strangely with the gloomy pile with which it was in contact. Round the summit of this vast amphitheatre rose a series of pinnacles of unequal height, the least of them exceeding a pyramid in bulk, among which the giant form of the Picacho towered conspicuously.

Turning back from this magnificent scene, I wended my steps along the terrace to the snowy field from which I had diverged, where I found Juanico waiting, and in some perplexity regarding the cause of my disappearance from view. Crossing the snow, our course lay directly up the steep

face of the peak, which was here thickly covered with debris and massive blocks of micaceous schist, the material of which the upper part of the mountain is composed. Our progress could only be made by leaping from one mass to another—an exertion that speedily became excessively fatiguing, and compelled us to pause at every ten yards of the ascent to recover breath and strength. At the same time the wind blew keenly, and easily penetrated the light summer clothing I wore, so that at the conclusion of such halts I found myself partially frozen. On this account I felt by no means inclined to linger by the way, and accordingly half an hour's strenuous efforts placed me on the summit of the peak. Following the example of Juanico, who had preceded me, I crept into a fissure of the rock; and there safely moored against the violence of the wind, had abundant opportunity to contemplate the prospect.

My first impulse was to look down the terrific precipice, on the brink of which I stood. The reader will easily picture to himself my position by imagining a circular wall eight hundred feet in height, on the coping of which I was steadying myself. Perhaps, also, he can enter into the mingled

sensations of awe and wonder with which I looked into this yawning void, and regarded the colossal proportions of its barriers. Age had not scooped it out by the slow process of decay, but it appeared to have been cloven out of the mountain top by the stroke of a hand mightier than the elements; its sides, sheer and steep, were as sharp-edged as on the day they parted asunder; and all that time could effect was to blacken them, and thus fill the gulf they embraced with a gloom and savage dreariness it is difficult for words to describe.

The view, however, from the "earth-o'ergazing summit" of a lofty peak, though it draws the vision downwards, is one that makes our thoughts take an upward flight. Heaven above, earth beneath, and boundless space around—I know not what may stir the spirit more than such a spectacle. To see on the one hand that world we call our own receding, as it were, into the distance, and on the other the broad threshold of immensity stretching out before us, awakens a host of feelings of overpowering force. We are standing on the confines of an upper world: no nearer may we stand in our mortal state: and urged by this thought, how intently does the eye scan the vault above it, as if it

could catch a glimpse of the wonders so mysteriously hidden! But the mighty firmament baffles inquiry; the volume shall not open till the scales of mortality drop from our eyes. And then with what thrilling emotion does one look down upon the high places around, feeling that we behold them as they are seen by Heaven! How glorious to see the deepest recesses of this mountain world disclosed to view, as if a veil had been withdrawn from it; and with supernatural ease to pry into the depths of its narrowest gorges, its most hidden nooks, and trace the shape of its most inaccessible peaks!

It seems impossible for the smallest rock in that vast assemblage to lurk unseen, so searching is the power of vision with which one feels gifted. And then the sense of utter loneliness and isolation—the consciousness that here the shadow of no earthly thing can fall across one—that every sight and sound are Nature's alone—all this mingles with the other emotions awakened, and produces an impression connected with this spectacle never to be effaced from memory. That the reader may comprehend how vast and varied was the scene I surveyed, it is necessary to inform him that the Mediterranean,

though fifty miles distant, seemed to lie at the feet of the huge pile from which I beheld it; and across its surface, perhaps fifty miles broad at this point, were discernible the winding shores of that great continent which to this day is but partially known to Europeans. The waters of this inland sea were hidden beneath a cloudy veil of spray, raised, doubtless, by the action of the gale, which still lashed round the summit of the Picacho. Where they touched the "land of the Moor," as Barbary is called by the Spaniards, a narrow border of snowy purity running along the coast indicated that their meeting with the land was in no friendly mood. Had the day been clearer, I might have beheld more than the outline of these inhospitable shores, and by looking towards the south-west, might have descried the summits of the lofty chain of Atlas; but a hazy mist enveloped that quarter, and shrouded from view an object which could not be less than a hundred and fifty miles distant.

In the same direction, and although nearer, still some eighty miles distant, were the mountains of Ronda, and an assemblage of minor ranges: further to the west, the prospect was shut out by the intervening sierras of Granada and Elvira, at whose feet

the vega spread its carpet of verdure. Though many a league distant, its aspect was still beautifully green, and, deep sunk among dark mountains, resembled an emerald lying in the hollow of a swarthy hand. Northward, the swelling crests of the Sierra Morena pitched the horizon; on the other side of them lay the table land of La Mancha; and it is affirmed that on a clear day may be descried the Guadarrama hills, ten leagues to the north of Madrid. Then, on the north-east and east came into view the sierras of Murcia and Valencia; while more to the south the wild ranges of the Alpujarras, an imposing host of savage peaks, filled up the space between my tower of observation and the distant Mediterranean. I doubt much if within the limits of Europe there can be found a prospect at once so vast and grand as that which is commanded from this summit. Land and water, mountain and plain, are here contemplated, on a scale of magnificence which almost realises the dreams of imagination: not one alone, but many provinces and kingdoms may be traced within the sweep of vision; and when memory recalls the history and fate of each, their past glories, their terrible convulsions, their influence upon the arts and sciences, the thoughts and

opinions, and the civilisation of Europe and the world, it is difficult to say whether the historic interest of the scene, or its wondrous grandeur, leaves the deepest impression on the mind.* To the view-hunter there is no spot so likely to gratify his passion; and as that taste is shared in no inconsiderable degree by the fair sex, to them I would say that there is nothing to prevent them from contemplating this noble panorama from the altitude to which I had climbed. The Picacho, as I have already stated, may be approached on horseback to within a quarter of a mile of its summit; the remainder of the ascent, though steep and fatiguing to those unused to clambering, may be achieved without danger, or without any accident more serious than a trip or stumble among the slippery masses that encumber the acclivity.

Rapidly descending, we passed the station of our friend of the cueva; who, by the way, was released only once in fourteen days from his hermit's occupation, upon which occasion he visited his family in Monachil, a village at the foot of the Veleta. This

* According to a computation made by a recent traveller, the view from the Veleta embraces a circumference of a thousand miles.

hamlet occupied a beautiful nook, watered by a crystal stream, and surrounded with groves and vegetation; here we made our noontide repast on a bench at the door of a tavern, for *venta* there was none in the place. Our appearance speedily attracted an admiring throng of loiterers and famished urchins, who gazed upon the evolutions of a fork with a surprise that expressed their ignorance of its use as a substitute for fingers.

During the remaining portion of my stay in Granada, I wandered without settled purpose through the city and its environs, directing my steps as fancy impelled; sometimes straying up the narrow vale of the Darro, or visiting the Generalife, or bending my course through the Vega, with no fixed point in view. One of the longest of these excursions brought me to the village of Zubia, a locality seldom visited by travellers, though connected with a memorable event in the life of Isabel la Catolica. While the Christian forces beleaguered Granada, their noble queen, impelled by motives of curiosity, was desirous of approaching as near as possible to the walls of the city, in order to obtain a closer view of those spires and minarets upon which her triumphant subjects were destined to place the Cross. For

this purpose she quitted the royal encampment at Santa Fe, and, protected by an escort, advanced as far as this village. The movement, however, did not escape the notice of the Moors; a strong body sallied forth and impetuously assailed the party, whose temerity seemed to invite an attack. In the skirmish that ensued, the queen found a place of retreat beneath the boughs of a spreading laurel, around which her gallant cavaliers fought stoutly until the arrival of succours from the Spanish host caused the foe to withdraw. To commemorate her safe exit from the peril of that day, her Majesty subsequently founded a convent upon the spot. Connected with its erection are some startling particulars, which I extract from the monkish chronicle that records this deed of royal gratitude and piety :—

“The queen having ascertained from her confessor, Don Fernando de Talavera, first archbishop of Granada, that the day of the skirmish was consecrated by the Church to Saint Louis, King of France, dedicated to him the convent of the Zubia as an eternal monument of her gratitude. In the garden of the convent remained the laurel of the queen, close to which is a cross of large dimensions, placed upon a pedestal piously formed of skulls and

bones of the dead. Among these spoils of our mortal frame there was a skull so restless, that however often it was ranged in order with the others, it would by no means abide in their company; it was repeatedly seen to leave its position, and this induced the friars to take more than ordinary precaution to fix it in its niche. But in spite of their purpose the skull leaped from the calvary, from which at length it remained excluded; for the friars being convinced that it was that of a Mahomedan, praised the mysterious hand that plucked it from among those which were anointed with the holy ointment in baptism."

Without much difficulty I gained admission into the garden of the convent, for, in common with all the monastic edifices in the hands of government, this religious building was abandoned to neglect, and bore witness to the depredations of the covetous or mischievous. The garden was overgrown with weeds, and in a state of complete disorder; but in the midst of it there still flourished a clump of noble laurels, the finest I had yet seen in Andalucia, and which anywhere would have attracted observation. Here, then, was the site of the incident to which I have alluded; and I would fain have fancied that

under the shade of the largest bush the queen had sought shelter, and from thence watched with anxious eye the struggle of her devoted followers against superior numbers; but the illusion could only have been indulged at the expense of truth: though venerable enough, my branching laurel could scarcely count more than a hundred summers, and was in all probability only a scion of the historic stem, which time had long ere this laid low.

As the day of my departure from Granada approached, I visited for the last time another convent, in order to discharge with all due punctilio that important ceremony in Spanish intercourse, the despedida, or leave-taking. It was not without regret that I entered for this purpose the parlatoria, where I had spent many a pleasant hour in chatting with those of the sisterhood with whom I was acquainted. On these occasions a variety of preserves and sweetmeats would be produced by the nuns, who considered themselves sadly affronted if I did not despatch a goodly portion of their store; after this would follow a string of questions touching Inglaterra, that "far countree" of heretics; while I, on my part, was equally inquisitive respecting the discipline and usages of conventual life. Necessary

as was the extinction of monastic institutions, in order to remove an incubus that weighed down the moral and intellectual energies of the nation, one could not listen to the tale of these poor women without learning that, in the mode of suppressing the convents, much hardship and injustice had been inflicted upon helpless sufferers. In the first instance, their property had been forcibly wrested from their possession; an act of spoliation for which there could be no justification, inasmuch as the abolition of monachism by no means involved the confiscation of conventual revenues: these were the private property of each religious community, and in strict justice they could no more be dispossessed of them than could a landed proprietor be deprived of his estates. This injustice will be better understood by the reader when he is made aware, that it was the custom for many individuals to enter convents, not so much from motives of piety as from the wish to pass the decline of their days in ease and comfort. For this end they contributed their quota to the convent funds; and, in fact, no one could enter a religious house without purchasing admission by a sum, which varied according to the rules of the order. Thus, in the

establishment with whose inmates I had become acquainted, the terms of admission ranged from £150 to £200; and without this dowry its doors were closed against all who might wish to dedicate their lives to its service. For the same reasons there were to be found many parents who selected this as the most eligible mode of securing to their daughters a provision for life. In a nunnery there was provided for them a home, where they were certain to feel none of the miseries attendant on poverty and old age; and hence the step of quitting the world for the seclusion of a religious life, so far from being taken with reluctance, as we are usually inclined to believe, was to many females an event that promised them a refuge from dependency and want. The injustice, therefore, of confiscating to the uses of the state, property devoted to such purposes, can admit of no palliation. It was further aggravated by the inadequacy of the equivalent awarded to the ejected monks and nuns. This only amounted to the trifling pittance of a peseta, or tenpence, a day—payment of which was of course the last matter to be attended to. In Spain, the rule of state is, that the most potent claimant gets justice done to him, while the weak and helpless

go to the wall: so it was with the recipients of this pension, which was invariably twelvemonths in arrear, and frequently longer. The consequences may be easily conceived: such only of the "exclaustrados" as were fortunate enough to possess friends or relatives, to whom they could appeal for assistance, succeeded in averting the pressure of poverty; but misery and destitution overtook the majority, and of the nuns there were not a few who, under such circumstances, betook themselves to a course of life the most opposed to that which they professed. After some time, permission was accorded to the nuns to return to their convents, a privilege of which numbers gladly availed themselves: their former homes, however, had in the mean time been reduced to mere shells of building; every article of a portable nature was gone; and, indeed, whatever portion of the structure might be converted into money was torn down and disposed of. To such an extent was this rapacious spirit carried, that in the parlatoria where I heard these things, thereja, or iron grating that separated visitors from the sisterhood, had not been spared; its place was now supplied by a wooden substitute of so frail a description, and so little calculated to exclude

the world, that I was careful not to lean against it, lest I might unceremoniously be deposited at the feet of the sisters. When I rose to bid farewell, I preferred a request which may perhaps strike the reader as somewhat singular. The truth is, that owing to the mode by which light was admitted into the apartment, I had not once caught a glimpse of Sor Theresa's and Sor Paula's features, frequently as I had conversed with them; and I now begged the favour of being permitted to behold their countenances. The good sisters readily complied, and one of them getting a candle caused its light to fall upon the features of herself and her companion. Assuredly it was with no expectation of viewing charms above the common that I had solicited this favour, but I was unprepared for the ghastly spectacle the light revealed. The seclusion, and perhaps the severities of a convent life, had told upon the health of the sisters, and given to their countenances the hue of death; while the only feature that seemed alive was the eye, which seemed to shine with an unnatural lustre. It would have been no flight of imagination to have fancied them creatures not of flesh and blood, so corpse-like was their appearance—assisted, moreover, as the illusion was by their

costume, which, with its hood and flowing drapery, might have passed for a shroud. Their voices, however, belied the unearthly character of their exterior, for they were low and soft, and deepened the effect of the kindly adieux that accompanied my parting.

The next thing was to find the means of conveyance to Malaga, whither I was proceeding. Tired, for the time, of mules, I bargained with a man for a tartana, or light covered cart, to convey me the whole distance. I agreed at once to his demand of eight dollars. "But then, Señor," said he, "the expenses on the road will be something, say ten dollars:" this was likewise agreed to. "Also a gratification for the mozo:" to this I had no objection: "Also—" but before he could finish the sentence I civilly bade him good morning, my patience being already considerably exhausted, and in no state to encounter the various "alsos" that might be forthcoming. The only alternative was, to take a place in the galera, or waggon, which plies between the two cities, and was to start that evening. Nothing, it is true, could be more slow or wearisome than this vehicle, which consumed two days or more in performing a distance over which a modern mail-coach, on a good road, would have bounded in a

few hours; but remembering Smollett's description of such a conveyance, and of its motley complement of passengers, I anticipated being repaid for physical discomforts by beholding in a Spanish galera some of the scenes that were wont to occur in an English waggon of the last century. As it slowly approached the spot where I was waiting for it on the outskirts of the town, I had full time to survey it minutely. The exterior was almost hidden by the multitude of packages which surrounded it in defiance of anything like order or arrangement. These were for the most part the property of the passengers, by whom the inside seemed to be filled: their noisy mirth I heard long before the cumbersome machine came up and displayed its mixed cargo—for there were as many females as males in the party. In front stepped six noble mules, harnessed in line, and decorated with bells; the most sagacious of the team leading the way, and pricking a safe passage among the ruts and inequalities of the road, which was in a wretched state of disrepair. About a mile from the city the conductor brought us to a halt, for the purpose of allowing the greater part of the passengers to descend: these were the friends of the intending travellers, and, in conformity with a

custom of the country, had accompanied them for a short distance on their way. With our numbers diminished to six, we again started; and while the machine is rolling onwards to Santa Fe I shall describe its inmates. Each class of the community appeared to have contributed its representative: there was the Church, in the shape of a subordinate connected with the cathedral of Granada; War was represented by a grey-haired officer and a young soldier on furlough; Commerce, by a young Biscayan merchant on a trading journey to Malaga; while Don E—— stood for that numerous body who disdain a profession, and live nobody knows how. One and all were already on the best of terms with each other—for Andalusians do not take half a day to thaw into speaking terms, as is the use and wont among Britons—and were now in the highest spirits for the journey. Among the travellers, however, was one who played a different part. This was a mastiff of the breed called in Spain “perro alan.” None are more renowned for fiercestness and tenacity of hold than these dogs, which, with all the courage of the bull-dog, are far superior to him in weight and strength. In the Plaza de Toros, when it happens that a bull shows himself a craven, and shrinks

from the lance of the picador, a storm of popular indignation breaks forth against the animal, and amid reiterated shouts of "Perros!" he is devoted to the dogs. On these occasions I have repeatedly witnessed a mastiff of this kind, after being tossed a dozen feet into the air, return undauntedly to the charge, and, though bleeding and mangled, endeavour to pin the bull to the ground. In this, however, it was rarely successful, for it was only when half-a-dozen were let loose at once that the lord of the pastures was fairly mastered. Being desirous of possessing a specimen of this description of dog, I applied to an individual in Granada who was said to be the owner of several. The man brought me an animal that struck me as being a perfect model of canine strength—deep-chested, with a fore-arm and neck like a lion's, while the head was small and finely proportioned. Moreover, his pedigree was of the highest class; he was, as his master phrased it, "a son of the Alcaiceria."

This is the bazaar of Granada, which at night is cleared of all its denizens, and consigned to the exclusive guardianship of a race of these dogs, whose courage is proverbial. Such a mode of protecting property, I may remark, seems to be a favourite one

with Spaniards, for in like manner the mosque of Cordova was guarded by a band of mastiffs, who were turned into its sacred precincts at nightfall; and it is only of late the custom has been abandoned. Finally, this son of the Alcaiceria, besides other recommendations, had peculiar claims to more than an ordinary share of ferocity, if such a quality is to be considered hereditary. It so happened that his grandsire and grandmother, while roaming in performance of their nocturnal watch among the narrow passages of the bazaar, discovered an individual lurking in a nook, with no good intent towards the commodities within reach. The unhappy man was instantly assailed by the savage pair, and in a trice worried to death: this, however, did not satisfy the animals, whose appetites had been awakened by the taste of blood, and they completed the tragedy by devouring a considerable portion of him before their keepers came in the morning to chain them up according to custom. For all these reasons I purchased this descendant of cannibal ancestors; whom, on my joining the galera, I found towing astern of it, not figuratively, but after a fashion that threatened him with the fate of "patas arriba," and that full soon. This being the first time he had ever

been attached to a vehicle, he had taken it into his head that some evil usage was thereby intended him, and instead of following quietly, was opposing, with a ludicrous air of defiance, the progress of the machine. With his paws extended in front to the full stretch, his attitude was a picture of stubborn resistance to superior strength; and rather than move an inch willingly, he preferred being dragged like a plough through the dust of the road. I speedily released him from this martyrdom; and on reaching Santa Fe, consigned him to the care of a peasant, who for a small remuneration undertook to conduct him to the termination of the stage. At Santa Fe commenced the miseries of the night: more passengers crept in under the tilt of the waggon, and diminished the scanty space so much, that at length it was impossible either to move or turn after having once taken up a position. We lay across the vehicle, our heads resting on the wicker-work which formed its sides. The veteran travellers had furnished themselves with pillows, in order to deaden the rude shock with which at each jolt their skulls came into contact with the wooden spikes that formed the top of the wicker-work; but the novices, among whom I was one, suffered un-

speakingly from their inexperience. For two long hours it seemed to me the vehicle was playing at football with my head; and gladly I rose as soon as a moonbeam stayed beneath our canopy, to follow it on foot. This I did for the remainder of the stage, which terminated shortly after sunrise, at a venta about a league from Loxa. While the rest of the party took up their quarters at the venta, I pushed on to this town, with which I was already familiar.

Seen from the vega, its aspect was striking and picturesque; it occupies the mouth of a gorge, in which the Genil turns to enter a narrow valley, between high and rugged steep. On the western side of the pass is built the principal portion of the town, the houses rising above each other in such a fashion that the foundation of one often appeared on a level with the roof of another. On the opposite side of the river a suburb leans against the precipitous slopes of the enclosing sierra, and communicates with the town by a bridge, celebrated of yore in the wars of Granada. At eight o'clock in the evening the galera came up, and I took my place in it with dismal forebodings: the hours, however, passed less drearily than I anticipated, for sleep

came to my relief; and when day broke I found we were ascending a magnificent pass. On the left hand a wall of rock, many hundred feet in height, towered above our heads; while on the right a pile of stony fragments, confusedly heaped together, rose nearly to an equal height. Through a narrow passage left at the bottom of this abyss, the road wound upwards by a gentle ascent, and conducted towards a wild ridge, which rose athwart our line of direction, and appeared to bar all egress from the defile. Suddenly turning into an opening on the right, we emerged from our gloomy strait into a broken and mountainous region, through which we alternately ascended and descended for three hours: at length the galera stopped at a humble venta, and the stage was completed. The hostelry in question was the meanest of its class I had yet seen on the road. Its best apartments were two or three murky dens, into which a traveller in England would have been loth to introduce his horse. Presently it transpired that there was another and a better venta about a mile distant, with the proprietor of which our conductors had quarrelled, and in revenge had transferred their custom to this wretched dwelling. Not being disposed to suffer martyrdom in

their cause, Don E——, our Biscayan friend, and myself, started for the other establishment, which is called the Venta de Dornajos. When about a few hundred yards distant from it we perceived two men approaching, whose appearance in a lonelier spot would have caused us to prepare our fire-arms for service. These strangers, whose costume differed in nothing from that of the peasant, were, however, the friends and not the spoilers of peaceful wayfarers. Their ostensible office, that of guardas del camino, was to patrol the roads and keep them clear of brigands; but after the usual fashion in which the “cosas de España” are managed, they lounge about the ventas all day, and on the approach of a carriage stroll out to meet it, and claim a gratuity for their vigilance.

The venta we found to be far superior to the miserable hovel we had quitted; it could even boast of an upper story, in which there was tolerable accommodation for the weary; and here we passed the time until, at the usual hour in the evening, the galera drove up. The aspect of the country, ere darkness shrouded every object, was impressed with the same wild character which had marked the scenery since leaving Loxa; the same gaunt and

bronzed sierras gathered round our route, and where a prospect was permitted the same dark blue summits were seen in the distance. As the night wore on, it became evident, from the increasing dampness of the atmosphere, that we were approaching the sea-coast; a refreshing breeze at the same time banished the sultry calm we had borne with impatience, and acted like a charm upon the spirits. Some time before dawn the conductor desired us to alight and proceed onwards for some distance on foot, as the galera was about to descend a steep declivity by a bad road, where an overturn was no unfrequent mishap. We were then crossing the amphitheatre of hills which encircle Malaga, from whose summits in daylight a noble prospect is commanded, but at that moment the obscurity scarcely permitted our eyes to distinguish the road; and when the dawn appeared we were nearly on a level with the town. In a few minutes more we had passed through the gardens that environ it; and thus terminated my first and last expedition in a galera.

CHAPTER VIII.

MALAGA—ITS HISTORY—ITS CAPTURE A GOOD SPECULATION—
 SMUGGLING—ALMERIA—ITS BEAUTIFUL BAY—MULETEER'S
 COTTAGE—I SPEAK LIKE A CHRISTIAN—ROUTE TO PURCHENA
 —INDUSTRIOUS CULTIVATION OF THE SOIL—PERSECUTIONS
 OF THE MORISCOES—TABERNAS—PARTICULAR INQUIRIES—
 PURCHENA—BAZA—GITANOS—ROW IN THE VENTA—GUADIX
 —ASPECT OF THE SIERRA NEVADA—PRONUNCIAMIENTO IN
 GRANADA.

THE position of Malaga, though neither picturesque nor imposing, is well adapted for the purposes of commerce. It lies in the bosom of a wide and beautiful bay, whose deep waters and sheltering promontories invite the merchantman to approach its shores without fear; while on the land side it is surrounded by a fruitful vega, backed by those vine-clad hills which have associated its name with the grape in all its varieties of preparation. The best point of view is from the mole, on the extremity of which stands a handsome lighthouse. Looking back towards the land, the eye rests upon

a rocky height upon the right of the town, whose summit and flank are covered with the extensive remains of ancient fortifications. That mass of ruined walls on the lowest slope is the Alcazaba; while the fortress crowning the height is the Gibralfaro, which derives its name from the *pharos*, or lighthouse, that once threw its light across the bay to welcome the Roman mariner; between the two a communication was maintained by means of a narrow passage defended by lofty walls, and fortified with towers. Still turning the eye to the right, the eastern flank of the bay is seen to sweep outwards in many a rocky curve to the sea; dark sierras come down from the interior, and confront with lofty brows the tideless waters; on the verge of each tall cliff a solitary watch-tower gleams in the sunshine: once its occupants looked out for the Algerine corsair, but their watch is now for the "contrabandista," no less than the African the enemy to Spain's commerce, and the offspring of her feebleness; here and there a level spot of shore lurks under the shadow of the cliffs, and furnishes room for a few scattered cottages and their smiling gardens; and in the furthest distance the village of Cantales lies in a sunny nook between two ridges,

its humble roofs screened from the easterly gales by a bold headland, which closes the view in that direction. Nor is the view towards the left inferior in beauty, though of a character less romantic. In the foreground the city and its many-coloured edifices spread irregularly along the margin of the bay; in the centre towers the cathedral, its barbarous architecture softened down by the distance, and now resolving itself into an imposing mass of building; then, on the outskirts of the town, white villas peep out pleasantly from among the orange-groves, and the rich foliage in which they are bowered; and the eye lingers upon this sight, so rarely seen in Spain except in the vicinity of populous towns. Further to the left extends along the coast the Sierra de Mijas, having at its base the village of Churriana, a favoured retreat of the Malagueños; and in the far west, seen above all the mountain throng, the dark blue sierras of Ronda gather sternly together.

Malaga lays claim to a remote origin. It was known to the Romans by the name of Malaca; and long before their conquering eagles were seen before it, the Phœnicians are said to have frequented its port. Knowing as we do how far the merchant

princes of Tyre and Sidon pushed their commercial expeditions, nothing is more probable than such a supposition, more especially as the surrounding sierras abounded in those precious metals for the sake of which their voyages appear to have been principally undertaken. Under the Moorish sway it was, as now, celebrated for the excellence of its fruits; and was a city of note during the last days of the Kingdom of Granada. Its capture preceded that of the capital, and was effected only after a resistance honourable to the besieged, who yielded rather to famine than the sword: they and their families were sold into slavery, and their possessions appropriated by the conquerors. In reading the narrative of its fall, as transmitted to us by Spanish historians, one learns how transparent was the disguise of religious zeal or patriotism under which the belligerent Castilians veiled their crusade against the lands and wealth of the followers of the Crescent. The truth is, that the spirit of speculation was then, as now, a characteristic of the times—with this difference, that, being influenced by the propensities of a people inured to war, it sought to attain its objects by violence and the sword rather than by the arts of peace. A company of adventurers banded them-

selves to capture and spoil a Moorish city, just as capitalists now unite to construct a railroad or work a mine. If it yielded to their arms, the booty, in captives, riches, houses, and precious metals, repaid them, and "they sold out to advantage." If, on the other hand, its defenders succeeded in protracting their resistance till the approach of winter, when a siege, in the state of the military art as it then existed, could with difficulty be carried on, the concern was generally wound up, and the speculators retired with loss. Thus, in reference to Malaga, there is extant the scheme of division, according to which the captors parted among themselves the city, in proportions corresponding to the contributions each had furnished towards the siege. At the head of the list we find the names of the Ponce de Leons, the Mendozas, Aguilar, Hurtados, Puertocarreros, and others of like renown, for their gallantry against the infidel; but lower down come a long string of burgesses and craftsmen, millers, tanners, armourers, and so forth, whose purses had liberally contributed to the undertaking, and to whom were now allotted their respective shares in the spoil.

Within the town are few objects of interest. Its cathedral is an unfinished structure, in the Hispano-Italian style of architecture. The *alameda*, however, is a noble promenade, diversified with fountains and trees, and bordered by a long line of stately dwellings, which throw into the shade anything of the kind to be seen in the other merchant cities of Andalusia. Outside the town, and beyond the Gibralfaro, is the site of the English cemetery, on a slope commanding a fine view of the Mediterranean. For long this was the sole public resting-place in Spain for British dead; and the credit of having obtained this boon from the authorities is due to Mr. Mark, the father of our present consul in Málaga. Previously, it was the custom to inter our countrymen in the beach, and then only at midnight; while the burial was accompanied by many circumstances to wound the feelings of mourners, and which it is surprising that the representatives of this nation at the Spanish court ever permitted to exist. The like fashion prevailed at Cadiz, where the only place of interment allowed to Protestants was in the ditches of the fortifications.

Although the legitimate commerce of Málaga is

great, it shares, like all the ports in this quarter, in the illicit traffic which has been called into existence by the absurdly prohibitory measures of the country. It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals engaged in this trade. I have heard it stated by persons on whose information I could rely, that it furnishes occupation to more than eighty thousand of the population along the coast and in the mountainous district of Ronda; but in reality the whole peasantry of Andalusia are interested in the trade, and if not professed contrabandistas, are always ready to join a "smuggling lay" when an occasion presents itself. The principal articles introduced are cotton goods and tobacco, the latter having the preference from being the more lucrative of the two. It is in vain that the most stringent measures are adopted by the government to suppress the traffic: if there were no other causes of failure, the universal corruption of its servants would suffice to neutralise the best devised scheme of prevention. For some months the system of protection had been placed on a new footing; a company had undertaken to enforce the laws, and had commenced operations by stationing steamers along the coast, in the hope of thereby baffling the smuggling boats,

which are invariably the swiftest of their class. Yet their success was very partial; shortly before my arrival in Malaga, a landing of seven hundred "cargas" or mule-loads had been effected at Estepona, a town on the coast not far distant from Gibraltar: this could only have been managed through the connivance of the officials connected with the place..

On a beautiful evening I found myself on board of a French steamer bound for Almeria. This is a port situated about one hundred and twenty miles to the eastward of Malaga, and lying close to the rugged regions of the Alpuxarras, which it was my present purpose to visit. From the summit of the Veleta I had descried the assemblage of wild sierras which bear that general name, and my resolution was quickly taken to embrace the earliest opportunity of penetrating into a mountain land rarely trodden by the traveller, though, from the grandeur of its natural features and from historical interest, well worthy of his steps. Here, after the fall of Granada, the shadow of a kingdom was given to the last of the Moorish monarchs; here the last rebellion of the hapless Moriscoes was kindled by the fires of the Inquisition; and in the

bosom of these savage chains they vainly strove to arrest by arms the course which Spanish cupidity had long meditated against the last remnant of their once powerful kingdom.

The last objects upon which my eyes rested ere we went below were the mountains to the westward of Malaga, crowned with the fading lustre of day; and when next morning I reached the deck, it was to behold on the left a chain of mountains rising gradually from the sea, and half veiled in purple shadows. The range followed the outline of the coast, close to which we were steering, and then bending its march inland, gave place to the wide heathy level called the Llanos de Almeria. Presently a beautiful bay opened into view, disclosing in its farthest recess a picturesquely situated town and castle. Towards these the steamer shaped its course, passing on the left a succession of craggy buttresses that boldly spring from the rocky wall on this side into deep water; and before noon the anchor was dropped in front of Almería.

At the *table d'hôte* of the inn I took my place as the last comer at the foot of a long table, around which was assembled as motley a collection of guests as I had ever witnessed; yet though the variety

was great, there were certain characteristics common to the whole party. All of them talked loud and long, all ate voraciously, and, reversing the usual order of things, all appeared to have *undressed* for dinner. Our transatlantic brethren are not singular in some things: many of these men sat at table with their shirt-sleeves rolled up to the shoulders; and without an exception all had their coats thrown far back, thereby displaying their hirsute throats and brawny bosoms. A stranger, however, just landed, would err greatly in concluding that such exhibitions as the above are frequent in Spain; in fact, these men belonged to the fraternity of commercial travellers and *commis voyageurs*, and only displayed the manners of their class, which neither in Spain nor elsewhere is distinguished for polish or refinement. The cause of their congregating in such numbers at this port arose from the circumstance of a sierra in the neighbourhood being lately found to possess numerous veins of lead ore, which promised to yield rich profits to the explorers. The discovery had awakened the highest excitement in a country where the inclination to gather wealth by any other means than the course of patient industry is a national character-

istic; and the usual consequences ensued. A multitude of adventurers and capitalists flocked in from all quarters, and, although utterly devoid of experience or science, were now engaged in piercing the mountain with pious ardour.

So many as a hundred pits were said to be sunk upon one side alone of the mountain, each excavation being the property of a different owner. What their success was, I found it difficult to learn; but it appeared to me, from the amount of litigation connected with their proceedings, that they were better skilled in undoing the work of their neighbours, than in extracting riches for themselves from the hoards of mother earth. I gladly made my escape from the noisy throng, and, accompanied by a guide, proceeded to view the castle. We ascended by a steep and winding path, the upper part laboriously hewn out of the solid rock; and reached, after passing through one or two gates, a wide open space which in days of yore had been the plaza de armas of the fortress. Still ascending, we gained the summit of the citadel, crowned by modern fortifications, which, from the date carefully emblazoned on the walls, had been constructed in the reign of Carlos Tercero. Few have heard of

the Bay of Almeria, for it lies out of the track of tourists; but in scenery it may challenge comparison with the most admired in the Mediterranean. The shores are everywhere high and striking, and fling their rocky masses into a noble crescent, within which all the navies of the world might find shelter. Perhaps a want of softness may be objected, as the eye ranges from point to point of its bold outlines, and sees cliff succeeding cliff with but little variety; but at the time I viewed it, the scenery had relieved the sternness of its primitive character with the hues of sunset, and was wrapped in the tranquillity of evening. The waters of the bay at the same time partook of the surrounding repose; and on their smooth surface the one or two white sails visible floated without appearing to move. On the eastern extremity of its shores there stretched out to sea a long line of black precipices, upon which the last of the sun's rays was shed with a brilliancy that enhanced by contrast the general effect of the scene. Within the bay, however, they had ceased to penetrate, for sierras swelled upwards on its western flank, and now cast their shadows across the deep blue of its waters. Then came twilight; and that, too, in a

short half hour darkened into gloom, over this beautiful daughter of the Mediterranean. What shall I say of thee, creation of summer skies, blue waters, and stately proportions? "O matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior," mayest thou never awaken to the roar of the tempest, nor reflect aught but the smile of heaven!

I had been fortunate in my experience of the Mediterranean: although associated in our thoughts with a peaceful temper, "its blood is sometimes up," and then, like all quiet people when fairly roused, its wrath is far worse than that of an habitual blusterer. Moreover, in so narrow a sea the navigator has a wild shore always within uncomfortable proximity; added to which, it is singularly deficient in harbours and ports of refuge

"Where are the best ports in the Mediterranean?" inquired the Emperor Charles V. of an ancient mariner.

"Junio, Julio, Agosto, y Puerto de Cartagena," replied the veteran; meaning that Cartagena was the only safe harbour at all seasons, and that the others were not to be trusted except during the three months of summer.

The town lies at the foot of the eminence on which its castle is situated; and, following the rule observable in most places of Moorish origin, its dwellings keep under the shadow of its fortifications, and scrupulously avoid straggling far from their protection. Here they encircled the base of the rocks in a narrow band for at least two-thirds of their circumference. Looking from above, their flat roofs presented a singular appearance; and being all nearly on a level, one might have passed from one end of a street to another by means of the passage they afforded. On the eastern side stretches its vega to the foot of a sicra which terminates in the Capo de Gata; in the midst wound the river of Almeria, its further bank clothed with the usual exquisite verdure of a vega; while on the nearer side groves of fig and olive trees extended up to the skirts of the town.

As I wandered through the town I might have moralised much upon the weakness of human nature, and taken my guide for the text. This worthy was by no means unwilling to stoop to the office for the considerations it involved, but at the same time wished to keep up his dignity among the citizens of Almeria. Evidently his desire was, to

impress them with the notion that he was the greater man of the two, and was only conducting me to the sights . . . an act of gracious condescension on his part. For this purpose he stationed himself at my right hand, presuming on my supposed ignorance of the law of Spanish etiquette, which enjoins that this is the post of those whom we consider ourselves bound to honour. Among equals in rank there is frequently a friendly struggle to yield this distinction to each other; and to a stranger it is always conceded. Of course, a hireling has just as much title to it as he has to lean on one's arm, or sit at the same table. Once or twice I dodged him and took my right place, in order to enjoy his crest-fallen looks and the air of trepidation he displayed when there was a chance of our meeting some of his acquaintances; but after all I found I had the worst of the diversion, for on these occasions he waxed sulky and uncommunicative, and was no better than a walking sign-post.

Next morning, with a roguish young muleteer for my companion, I was bending my course towards the dark sierras that thickly cover this district, and increase in height as they recede from the coast. My route was inland, and would take me by

the cities of Purchena, Baza, and Guadix, and conduct me once more to Granada. We left the town by a good road, amid gardens and groves; but this sank into the usual mule-track long before we had reached a hamlet about a league distant, where my muleteer had his abode; and stopping before a door, he requested me to alight and enter his home, pleading as an excuse for the detention some important piece of business. The truth, however, was, that having got hold of an Ingles, he was desirous of showing the animal to his family and friends: and when I entered, I found myself in the centre of an admiring throng of observers. I believe they had imagined me to belong to the mute creation, for on addressing them in their own tongue there was a general exclamation of surprise. "Ave Maria! he can speak like ourselves!" was the remark that ran round the circle; and some went even the length of declaring that I could "speak like a Christian." The flattering compliment I duly acknowledged; for a compliment it was, and meant that I could speak like a Spaniard. According to the notions of the country, none but Spaniards are Christians, so that the terms are used synonymously, and the Spanish is frequently styled

the Christian language. Luckily, my powers of speech were not much drawn upon, and I had, accordingly, sufficient opportunity for making my own observations. I could easily have fancied myself in the interior of an Arab tent, so much was there bespeaking a wandering life in all that I saw. The roof was dome-shaped; the light had no other entrance than by the door; and all the furniture in the place might have been borne by a camel; such as it was, it consisted only of articles of a very portable nature, and half an hour would have sufficed to have packed it all up, after the word to march had been given. With the exception of a single low table, and a couple of still lower chairs, I saw nothing but a few mats, rolled up during day, and at night spread out to form beds, and some cooking utensils. The mistress of the house was as dark as a mulatto, and had a scarlet handkerchief bound round her head, turban fashion; her sole ornaments were a pair of large gold ear-rings depending from the ears. On the floor a couple of tawny bantlings rolled about, in happy unconsciousness of the restraints of dress; indeed, the costume of the male seniors indicated a desire to doff as much of man's apparel as might be safely dispensed with. The

whole party wore very wide and loose trowsers, terminating about a hand's-breadth above the knees, which were bare, so that, at a little distance, this part of their attire might easily be mistaken for a kilt. Then came the usual botines, or leggings, and shoes of untanned leather; jackets appeared to be altogether banished, and in their stead the vests received that amount of fanciful decoration, lavished by Andalucians on the former article of dress. This, with some little variation, is the costume of the dwellers in the Alpuxarras, as well as of the natives of the province of Valencia: the latter, however, frequently discard the sombrero calanes, for which is substituted a handkerchief, tied in a peculiar fashion on the head.

Once more upon the road, if such it might be called, for the path led up the channel of a mountain torrent, amid rocks and shingle, which the stream had deserted since the spring, and would only sweep over when the winter's rains again called it into existence. On either side the banks rose high and precipitous, but it was a pleasing feature to behold how the hand of industry had laboured to make them fruitful. The ground, whenever it could be rescued from the bed of the

torrent, was carefully surrounded with embankments and brought into cultivation; and higher up, on the steep slopes, the soil had been collected into terraces, upon which vines and other fruits flourished luxuriantly. All this was a novel sight to me, accustomed as I had been to witness in the more fertile districts of Andalusia the richest portion of the soil alone devoted to culture, while the remainder was abandoned to the goatherd and his flock. Here, on the other hand, the industrious spirit of the Moor still lingered, clothing the mountain sides with fruitfulness, and wresting her good things from the unwilling hand of nature. The spectacle vividly impressed one with the folly and wickedness of the policy which, for the worst of motives, could banish from this region a race which had left behind them these marked traces of a laborious and persevering nature. It was in truth a worse motive than religious zeal that prompted the fiat which condemned them to expulsion; and though Cervantes laboured hard to persuade his readers that the step was a master-stroke of wisdom, and was the only one to be adopted towards the irreconcilable enemies of his country and faith, the grossness of the pretext was as apparent in his day to the unpre-

judiced, as it is in ours. We have the real truth from the pen of Don Diego de Mendoza, one of those warrior statesmen who illustrated the reign of Charles V., and were moreover as distinguished in the world of letters as they were for deeds of arms, and sage counsel. In his classic work in Spanish literature—the “History of the War of Granada” during the year 1598, or to speak more accurately, the rebellion of the Moriscos during that year—the truth is revealed in these words, “Our covetousness was the chief cause of the rebellion.” The insurrection, it is true, was suppressed, and heavier burdens imposed on the mountaineers; but nothing less than their extirpation could appease the demon of avarice: their industry, activity, and thriving condition were a perpetual eyesore, which was borne with impatience for some years longer, till at last the sight could be endured no more, and in 1600 the mandate was issued for their expatriation from a region which they and their forefathers had redeemed from poverty. In that year Spain lost a million of industrious subjects, torn from this district and from Valencia, and added one more to the various seeds of decay implanted in her overgrown power. So iniquitous a transaction could not be

perpetrated without its attendant measures of perfidy and cruelty: in the latter quality Cardinal Lerma displayed an unenviable ingenuity; but the system of studied oppression, though carried to its height in his hand was by no means a novelty to the Moriscoes. From Mendoza we learn how a people may be goaded into rebellion; the catalogue of their persecutions is a curious one, and includes almost every vexation that can rouse human nature to exasperation.

“The Inquisition,” he writes, “began to harass them more than usual. The king forbade them the use of the Moorish language, and along with it all commerce and communication with each other; their black slaves were taken away; the Moorish dress, upon which they had expended much wealth, was prohibited; they were compelled to assume the Castilian attire, at much cost to themselves; their women were commanded to appear unveiled, and their dwellings, which they were wont to surround with privacy, to be thrown open to the public eye; both these commands being hard to be endured by a jealous people. There was a rumour, also, that their children were to be seized and transported to Castile. They were prohibited the use of baths, so

necessary for their cleanliness and refreshment. Previously, they had been debarred the enjoyment of music, songs, festivals, and weddings according to their customs, and every meeting for diversion." Such was the mode employed to reconcile the Moriscoes to the Spanish yoke and the Catholic faith.

At five o'clock we reached the small village of Tabernas, where I took up my quarters for the night. Having suffered much during the day from the heat, which, in the narrow ravine up which our road lay, was peculiarly oppressive, I was glad to find in the inn an apartment where I could enjoy in solitude the rest I desired. Its sole furniture consisted of a table and chair, both of them so dwarfish as to resemble toys for children, rather than articles for the accommodation of grown-up persons. The table, which for curiosity's sake I measured, was fifteen inches high by two feet long; its companion chair was proportionably diminutive, and only raised the occupant six inches from the ground. In this trifling matter the reader will observe a trace of the Moorish habit of sitting on the floor, from which these pigmy chairs are only the first remove. Although left to solitude, my chamber was far

from being the abode of silence, for a solitary plank alone divided me from the noisy party of muleteers who occupied the kitchen below, and whose conversation ascended without a word being lost to the ear. As a matter of course, I found myself made the subject of talk, and gathered a good deal of information, not only respecting myself, but the manners and customs of the English, that was perfectly new; neither did it take me by surprise to hear a voice inquiring, with unnecessary particularity, what was the road I purposed taking on the morrow—if I carried arms—and of what description they were. At an earlier period of my travels, before I learnt to estimate at their proper value those tales of danger and recent robbery which my good-natured friends used invariably to connect with the very route I intended to take, I should have listened with some suspicion to such queries, and on the following morning should have narrowly scrutinised every bush and rock that might have screened the person of a “ratero.” But I had long since ceased to pay the slightest regard to the dismal narratives of kind friends, or to espy danger in the idle curiosity of village gossips; and, as my experience in Andalusian travelling increased, I settled down into the

conviction that with proper precautions a wayfarer might roam the province from end to end without meeting a single cause for alarm. I do not, however, mean to affirm that its wild tracks are as fearlessly to be traversed as the beaten highways of England. Many causes conspire to forbid this; but the most prominent are the lawless pursuits of the population, and the nature of the country. Andalusia swarms with contrabandistas, few of whom could resist a tempting opportunity to commit robbery; and whose only resource, when overtaken by a run of ill-luck in their own calling, is to lie in wait by the roadside and cry "Boca abajo" to the next traveller. It is from this class that brigandism has drawn its supplies on every occasion that a band has infested the country. From their habits of activity, their intimate acquaintance with highways and bye-paths, and the spirit of freemasonry that exists among the fraternity, they were the most desirable recruits to a bandit chief; and, without their aid, it is doubtful if such leaders could have held their ground so long as they did against the power of the government. Moreover, the physical character of the country peculiarly favours the highway robber. Besides

being naturally wild and broken, it presents no obstacles to his escape in the shape of enclosures or fences. The block struck, he may hold his flight across the countee straight as the crow flies, without encountering any impediments except such as arise from the inequalities of the surface. This is the sort of ground he has always chosen for his exploits. It was on the heaths and extensive commons that the English highwaymen of the last century took their stand; and their disappearance is to be ascribed far less to an improved tone of morals, than to the fact of uncultivated wastes being now almost unknown, and every road bordered with its substantial fence. What between stiff hedges, stone walls, and turnpike-gates, a highwayman has now no chance of escape, and could scarcely spur his steed a mile without breaking his neck, or being despoiled by a score of witnesses. For the reasons, then, that I have stated, a degree of insecurity to be found nowhere else hangs over Andalusian roads, and will continue to do so as long as the present state of things exists in the province. Every now and then a band springs up in some district, holds the neighbourhood in terror for a shorter or longer period, and then the depredators vanish as suddenly

as they appeared. Amid all these perils, however, a prudent traveller may steer his way without much chance of a mishap. Let him eschew all the signs of riches, assume the costume of the country, be tolerably conversant with its language, shoulder a gun to scare away rateros, and his purse need apprehend little on the score of assaults from saltadores.

The next day's journey is best described by saying, that we were involved for many a burning hour among the wildest scenery that sierras can display. A lonely path was ours during that period; sometimes diving into a ravine where the prospect above and around disclosed only brown crags and toppling rocks; then struggling up some precipitous steep over a surface of slippery rock—our animals planting their steps in the holes worn by the constant passage of their kind along the track; and now skirting the edge of a precipice, and looking over its verge into the abyss below. At such times, although a stumble of our quadrupeds might have ended in fatal consequences to the riders, one had learnt, from familiarity with the danger, to regard it with indifference. More than once, as my feet overhung a precipice, I caught myself speculating on the precise spot, some two or three hundred feet

below, my shoe would touch, should it fall off. By such a route we crossed the Sierra de Filabres, and after some ten or twelve hours' toilsome march reached the town of Purchena. The single street of which it consisted hung upon the northern flank of a mountain, at a spot where there existed the scantiest room for dwellings; yet within these straitened limits a king had once held the mockery of a residence and court. Here it was that Boabdil, the last of the Moorish monarchs, exercised the shadow of an authority permitted him by his conquerors, and ruled for a time over a few villages and valleys—the worthless remains of a kingdom that was once his. But soon feeling ill at ease in his degraded position, he exchanged his dignities and powers for a large sum of gold, and departed for Africa, where he fell on a field of battle, bravely combating in the cause of his relative, Muley Ahmed ben Merini. “Strange,” adds the Moorish chronicler, “that he who had not the courage to die in defence of his own kingdom and country, should sacrifice his life for the success of another!”

Next day was like the preceding, spent among the defiles and steepes of a sierra. Long shall I remember the Sierra de Baza, for besides being as rugged as

mortal foot ever trod, the heat within its gorges and labyrinths was more oppressive than I had ever felt it in Andalucia. From the lateral ravines that opened into the valley by which we descended to the city of Baza, there poured blasts hot as those of the desert to heighten the temperature; and so intolerable was the scorching current, that on approaching the mouth of one, the whole party instinctively drew their sombreros over their faces, and bent over the opposite side of their mules, until the spot had been passed. At length the city appeared, coming into view rather unexpectedly, for it occupied a hollow in the midst of its fertile hoyas, or basin; and the tops of its houses were only visible on gaining the brow of the surrounding height. In the posada, the sole occupants of the upper chambers I found on my arrival to be a party of Gitanos. Frequently as I had encountered the sons of Egypt on the highway, in the suburb of Triana, at Seville, and at the doors of their caverns above the Albaycin at Granada, this was the first time I had met them under the same roof. My fellow-guests were, however, the aristocracy of their tribe. The principal, or at least the wealthiest of the wanderers, was a widow, whose sex did not prevent her from en-

gaging in the calling so dear to Gitano natures, viz., trafficking in horseflesh. In a day or two a great horse-fair was to be held in the town, and to attend this she had come bringing with her half a dozen gaunt steeds, which occupied the stables below. By successful dealings she was now well to do in the world, and could boast of her thousands of dollars; in addition to which she possessed the sole ownership of a lead-mine in the vicinity of Almeria. All these riches were to be inherited by an only daughter; whose hand, after being eagerly sought for by various members of the race, was at last engaged to a youth who accompanied the twain. The damsel had made her selection with judgment, for her novio was a handsome specimen of Gitano blood—tall and slender in figure, and with an oval countenance, the clear olive complexion of which contrasted to his advantage with the usually swarthy hue of his tribe.

The times are passed when the Gitanos roamed the country in large bands, plying by wholesale their unlawful crafts in the pueblos they traversed, and, wherever they moved, a terror to the lonely traveller. An old Spanish author, while thus journeying alone through the mountains of Ronda, graphically

describes his meeting with a horde on the march, the mortal fear the encounter caused him, and the stratagem by which he extricated himself from the thievish crew, by whose hands it was no unusual thing for the solitary wayfarer to be despoiled of his life as well as purse. "While ruminating upon the wonders of nature, I fell in so unexpectedly with a troop of Gitanos, at a stream called the Doucellas, that I would have turned back had they not seen me, for immediately I called to mind the murders that then were occurring on the road, committed by Gitanos and Moriscoes. As it was an unfrequented one, and I happened to be alone, and with no prospect of finding people passing by to bear me company, with the best spirits I could, while they began to solicit charity, I said to them, 'God save you, good people!'

"They were drinking water, but I invited them to try wine, and handed a flask of Pedro Ximenes of Malaga, and the bread I carried with me; for all that, they ceased not to beg and demand more and more. It is my custom—and he who travels alone should adopt it—to convert into small change the silver or gold that one requires for the journey from one town to another, because it is most dangerous

to display gold and silver at the ventas or by the way; and my purse being therefore filled with small coins, I drew out a handful, from which I distributed charity (never in all my days had I done it with a better will than now among the party. The women travelled in pairs, seated on very lean yeguas and nags; the children by threes and fours, on lame and footsore donkeys. The rogues of Gitanos marched on foot, nimble as the wind; and at that time they seemed to me both tall and athletic, for fear magnifies objects very much. The track was both narrow and dangerous, encumbered by many large roots of trees, and my beast stumbled as much as he could. From time to time the Gitanos gave it slaps on the haunches; while it appeared to me that they were about to do the same thing to my soul, for I journeyed on the lowest and narrowest part of the road, and the others along the sides above me, by paths winding among a thousand dwarf oaks and lentisks. In the midst of this perturbation and fear, as I proceeded, directing cautious glances at the sides, moving my eyes but not the head, a Gitano suddenly planted himself before me, and seized the bridle and bit of my anima. While I was about to cast myself

upon the ground, he exclaimed, 'I see your macho has lost the marks of age on its teeth.'

"Said I to myself, 'May you find the gate of heaven closed to you, O thief! for the fear you have caused me.'

"They inquired if I would exchange it; but as I considered that their object was to rob me, and that I could not get rid of them except by holding out the prospect of greater plunder, with the best face I could I drew forth some more change, and distributing it, said, 'I would do so with pleasure, but I have left behind me a friend of mine, a merchant, who is alone, and whose macho has fallen lame. I am now pushing on to the next pueblo, to fetch another animal to transport the load of money it bears.'

"On hearing the words 'solitary merchant,' 'lame macho,' and 'load of money,' they cried, 'God speed your worship! in Ronda we shall employ the alms you have bestowed on us.'

"I spurred my macho, and caused him to pace along these rugged tracks rather faster than he liked; they remained behind, speaking in their jargon, and waiting for the supposed merchant. Afterwards I

saw one of the men condemned in Seville for robbery, and a female receive the punishment of a sorceress in Madrid. Of the children, some were naked, others clothed in a slashed jerkin or torn jacket; among the Gitanos one was attired in a superior manner, her costume adorned with plates of silver, and wearing bracelets of the same; the rest were only partially clad."

In the present day the Gitanos rove only in families or small parties; and if they rob, it is rather by fraud and deception than by the knife to the throat of the wayfarer. Still, as of yore, their darling occupations are connected with the horse: to buy and sell, to steal, exchange, and metamorphose that noble animal, are the employments of the greater number; to which they add the vocation of clipping the hair of mules and burros—for in Spain it is the fashion to shear the backs of beasts of burden. In all the tricks and mysteries of the profession none such proficient as they: in transforming an unsound into a sound animal—in painting and otherwise disguising a stolen one, so that the owner himself would fail to recognise it—and in stupifying a vicious one, so as to give it the appearance of the best temper in the world, the Gitano is *longo*

intervallo superior to all the other brethren of the craft; nay, more, he will convert the dullest piece of horseflesh into an animated and lively steed, while he seems only to be patting and fondling it. The trick is, I think, unknown in this country, and is effected by means of the ring he wears; from this projects an almost imperceptible iron spike, which acts like the rowel of a spur on the animal, causing it to prance and caracole, while the wearer seems only to be carelessly touching it with his open hand.

The road next day was less lonely than the paths we had hitherto painfully pursued by cliff and ravine; we were from time to time meeting parties of itinerant merchants hastening to find a market for their wares at the fair to which I have referred. Now a mule would pass us laden with bales of cloth, or a donkey staggering under a burden of alcarrazas, or porous earthen jars used for cooling water. Some of the travellers seemed to transport their household gear along with the stock in trade, for occasionally a beast would accompany the train groaning under a pile of mattresses, pillows, and chairs, while frying-pans and brazen lamps suspended from the neck kept up a jingling accompaniment to its

movements. Among the pedestrians came a gang of Catalan harvest reapers, returning from their labours on the fertile plains of the province. I watched with admiration the free step of these sons of toil, as they rapidly approached. On they came at a long swinging pace that made their progress an astonishingly fast one; and this was the more difficult as the ground was rugged and uneven, and peculiarly adverse to fleetness of foot; but, despising every inequality, their spare and sinewy forms bounded lightly over the surface, and holding a straight course over hill and dale, were speedily lost to sight. Their province is, however, noted for the pedestrian powers of its population, and their capacity to endure extraordinary fatigue.

At midday I halted at a *venta*, the name of which I have forgotten, being in hopes to obtain some breakfast—a refreshment which constant travel since daybreak had rendered very desirable. Before the door was congregated a troop of mules, burros, and machos; and as we approached it the sounds of music and mirth, proceeding from within, betokened that their owners were yielding themselves some relaxation previous to braving the long stage that awaited them on their way to Baza. On entering,

I found the place filled with a throng of country people, principally young folks, and all, both men and women, arrayed in holiday attire. On the earthen floor, three or four soldiers, and as many dark-eyed partners, were dancing the fandango and rattling their castanets to the strains of a guitar, which the performer accompanied with his voice. Making my way through the crowd, I passed into an inner chamber: here sat the seniors of the assemblage, on benches ranged round the wall. As it was a festive occasion, the wine-cup did not pass untasted, and the consequences were observable in a manifest increase of Andalusian loquacity and gesticulation. I blessed the good fortune which had thrown a fair in my way, for, in anticipation of the concourse to be assembled here, the ventero had laid in a store of viands; and, for once, I could procure something better than the everlasting bacalao. Bread, eggs, grapes, and wine, were placed on a table about the size of a chessboard, and of the height of an ordinary chair; seated before this, upon a stool proportionably low, I proceeded to make my repast in the corner allotted to me.

The mozo of the venta was a tall youth, whose office, as cup-bearer to the gathering, had brought

his lips into frequent contact with the generous fluid he dispensed: the consequences were apparent in his rolling eye, flushed cheeks, and the air of consummate self-importance with which he discharged his duties. Or of the guests called him to fulfil some order, to which he paid no attention; the summons was repeated in an angrier tone, for the speaker was himself excited by the libations he had swallowed, and accompanied his order with a threat.

“Who dares to threaten *me*?” cried our mozo, as he stood rather picturesquely in the middle of the floor, his arms raised above his head to their full stretch, in support of a jar that might contain about a gallon of wine, and had the top of his heated cranium for an unsteady pedestal.

“Yo;” thundered the other in reply.

The word was hardly uttered ere the jar was launched at the head of the speaker, who, fortunately for its safety, ducked, and escaped the missile, which smote the wall behind him with a great crash, and poured a deluge of blood-red liquid over his neck, shoulders, and white vestments. In a trice he sprang up, a gory figure instead of a clean and trim little man; and rushing upon the mozo with a howl of rage, the twain grappled together in

the true worrying style. The rest of the company as quickly jumped to their feet, and throwing themselves upon the pair, endeavoured to part them; but in trying to effect this, they only impeded each other's efforts, and for the next two minutes a mass of ten or twelve human beings might be seen tugging, hauling, and straining at each other's throats, apparently for no conceivable object, and all the while reeling about the room. To complete the effect of the scene, the terrified hostess revolved round the struggling group with a sort of dancing step, uttering doleful "Ayes de mi!" and putting up many a prayer to the Virgin. All this was highly diverting to me, until the mass surged into my corner, and, upsetting the table, scattered my breakfast on the floor: then, indeed, the whole affair assumed quite a different aspect, and I thought it shameful that people could not meet in a venta without engaging in unseemly brawls, and, what was worse, depriving me of my repast. At last the fray was brought to a close: the originators of it, being drawn asunder by two or three peacemakers, were held apart at a few paces from each other, and stood breathing hard from their exertions, and with countenances less wrathful than before.

“Are you friends?” was the inquiry made them by some of the bystanders, in the way in which that question is put to children who have squabbled and fought with each other—“Are you friends now?”

The pair intimated their assent; and then being released, rushed once more into each other's arms, not to renew the combat, but to embrace as brothers.

“Moriré por él!” (I will die for him) shouted the little man, as he caught up his tall antagonist, and swung him round and round in a fit of ardent affection; then the company resumed their seats, and peace was re-established.

As we wended our way from the venta, I questioned my muleteer as to what he would have done had the brawlers used their navajas, and the life of one been taken.

“I would have made off as quickly as possible,” said he; “and the same would all the others have done.”

“And would you have left the man weltering in his blood?”

“Without doubt,” he replied.

There was reason in this. According to the old

law of Spain, he who was found in the vicinity of a murdered man was liable to be considered as the guilty person, and had to prove his innocence ere he recovered his liberty. From this it followed, that as soon as a man fell wounded in some broil, everybody fled from the spot—the innocent bystanders as well as the murderer—lest the justicia should bear them to prison: even those who might have wished to act the part of good Samaritans, were deterred by like apprehensions from drawing nigh, so that the stricken wretch not unfrequently perished from want of timely assistance. I am not aware if this law has been altered, but the feeling it engendered yet exists, and people are rather shy of meddling with the bleeding work of assassins or brawlers.

The road from Baza to Guadix is marked in the map as a royal highway, and practicable for carriages; and truly we did meet one solitary vehicle, a tartana, or light covered cart, the sight of which being a rarity in these regions, so startled my mule that she sprang down a steep slope, and the rider being carelessly seated sideways, sent him rolling down the declivity. Nevertheless, I would counsel no four-wheeled vehicle to try this route, which only differs from a mule-track in being a little wider,

and in displaying a little less of the staircase fashion by which these paths ascend and descend the mountain acclivities. The scenery at the same time began to smoothe its rugged front, and the grim sierras, which we had unceasingly encountered during the preceding days, now ceased to cross our way; the slopes became longer, and were sprinkled with olive woods; and for the last hour of our journey we moved along a valley, glimpses of an open country extending before us.

At length Guadix came into view, being, like Baza, invisible until close at hand, and for the same reason: its site lay in a hollow sunk beneath the level of the surrounding expanse, and the first objects that one beheld were its grey roofs covering an irregular space in the midst of fruit-trees and foliage. Both this town and Baza were places of note during the last days of the Moorish kingdom, and enthusiastically supported the cause of Abdalah el Zagal against his nephew, Boabdil the Unlucky. The fiery spirit of the Zagal appears to have been more congenial to their population than the weak and vacillating temper of Boabdil, for both places resisted their fate with a valour worthy of their conquering founders. Baza capitulated after a six

months' siege; and although Guadix was not exposed to similar trial, being surrendered without a struggle by the Zagal, its warlike renown secured it favourable terms, and it had the honour of being the last but one of the Moslem cities to strike the Crescent to the Cross: the last was the capital itself.

Once more in Granada, after a twelve hours' march under a fiery sun. How enchanting was the brilliant green of its vega, to eyes which for hours had contended with the dazzling light, and shrunk from the hot glare reflected by naked and tawny rocks and withered steeps! All day long our route was by the base of a sierra, which, rising less abruptly than the others in this region, presented none of the bold features by which they are converted from desolate elevations into striking mountain masses: its aspect was therefore uninteresting and drear, and as we slowly advanced, the effect of its presence was as if we were linked to a cheerless but inseparable companion. Again, to the south swelled upwards the Sierra Nevada, vast, soaring, and dark: from this, the northern side, its aspect is far more imposing than from the other; the precipices are loftier, the slopes more abrupt, and the towering

Veleta itself shoots upwards with a bolder front. No mountain that I have yet seen rests so completely as does this upon mere vastness and altitude for the impression it creates. It disdains the effects derived from the usual embellishments of mountain scenery: vainly does the eye search for the pine-clad steeps, the shady glens, the torrents and foaming cascades, the purple heaths, and the ruined castles that diversify the stony exterior of other alpine heights; neither were glaciers to be seen, nor snowy peaks with their cold brightness and reflected gleams; but the blackness of night clothed the mountain from the base to the summit, and it rose grandly in a succession of stupendous walls, till a solitary pinnacle alone pierced the deep blue of heaven. The effect of a lofty elevation thus dressed as it were in a sable pall from head to foot was indescribably striking, and as a picture of mournful sublimity it would be difficult to find its parallel.

To the southward and eastward of the Veleta lay the district of the Alpuxarras, as it is defined by Spanish geographers; and within its limits are comprehended the highest ranges of the Sierra Nevada. Desirous as I was of penetrating into this rugged region, I found it closed to me by the

intense heat which reigned in its narrow valleys. I was compelled, therefore, to depart from my original intention, and to limit my wanderings to the lower elevations that surround its confines. Even then the hardships one suffered sometimes overpowered every other consideration, and the scenery was occasionally forgotten while passing through the fiery furnace of some ravine, or scaling a rocky steep in the full blaze of the sun.

Granada I had left as stirless and lethargic as a venerable capital ought to be; but on my return there was so unusual an excitement and bustle observable, that it seemed as if the genius of the Albaycin, that focus of revolt during the Moorish domination, had suddenly awakened from his sleep of centuries, and breathed his spirit into the gesticulating groups that occupied the plazas and corners of the streets. For, perhaps, the twentieth time in its short constitutional existence, it had "pronounced" in favour of some question of national policy, and against the administration, so that its present attitude was that of declared hostility to the ruling powers. Accordingly its worthy citizens had voted themselves into a state of war; and great were their preparations in consequence. There

was much beating of drums in various quarters of the city, and columns of "nacionales" were tramping through the streets every half hour; the shops were shut at an earlier hour than usual, the city gates doubly guarded, and all who entered rigorously examined. All this had been effected without bloodshed—if we except one citizen soldier, accidentally slain by a brother "nacional;" and, in truth, it is rare to hear of a "pronunciamiento" being accompanied with the realities of a conflict. If the movement corresponds with the general tone of feeling in the country, similar demonstrations are sure to take place in the other large towns, and then the fate of the administration may be considered as decided; but if it is only an isolated expression of sentiment, which fails to elicit support from its neighbours, the "pronouncers," who are generally peace-loving shopkeepers, on seeing this, drop the musket and their politics, return to the counter, and submit to anything rather than fight for their opinions. A few years ago the city of Seville pronounced and declared, by the voices of some thousands of her national guards, that she wished a change of ministry. In a few days she perceived that she stood alone; and her citizens did not well

know what to do, until the Governor of Cadiz settled the matter. He despatched four hundred of the regular troops, whose appearance worked like a charm upon the thousands of brave "nationals." Not a shot was fired in anger; and when this handful of men entered the city, the "pronouncers" were nowhere to be seen, having acted upon the principle, that "He who runs away, may live to 'pronounce' another day."

CHAPTER IX.

ROUTE TO RONDA—ARCHIDONA—THE CLOTH-MERCHANT—ANTEQUERA—THE KIDNAPPERS DISCOVERED—THE MOORISH LOVERS—SALT LAKE—CAMPILLOS—THE DEATH OF THE DOUGLAS—THE SHRINE—ASPECT OF RONDA—THE CHASM—THE MINA—CHARACTER OF THE SERRANOS—THE DISMANTLED VENTA.

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NEXT day I was traversing the vega, Gibraltar being my bourne. My muleteer was a Granadino who had accompanied me on ascending the Veleta, and on that occasion, as well as some others, proved himself worthy of confidence. I shall pass over the vega in silence, being now thrice-trodden ground, and begin my comments at a point a short way to the westward of Loxa. Between that town and Archidona extends an undulating country abandoned to cheerless wastes, which sometimes give place to groves of the sombre olive. As we neared the latter town, Juan pointed out a rugged track ascend-

ing the mountain by which it is overshadowed. This he said was once a road, and was constructed in one night by the forces of Ferdinand and Isabella, in order to facilitate the transport of the artillery employed in battering the castle, which crowns an isolated peak rising from the skirts of the mountain. The town is situated on a slope, and boasts of something more than a principal street, for on traversing this, between convents on either side, we passed under an arch and entered a tolerably handsome plaza, of an octagon shape. Here was situated the *posada*, which was rather superior to the generality of Andalusian inns.

In the course of the evening, as I was sitting in my apartment, there entered a stranger, whom I recognised as an itinerant cloth-merchant I had seen below, tending the mules on which his bales were conveyed. "Usted està solico, señor," said he, in a tone that expressed pity for my loneliness; and then, without further preface, took possession of the other end of the wooden bench on which I was seated; and which, by the way, together with a table, completed* the whole furniture of the room.

"Voy á hacer á usted dos o tres preguntitas"—
(I am going to ask you two or three little questions)

—"I have got some *cargas* of Spanish cloth, and I wish to know if it would sell to advantage in the Plaza" (Gibraltar). I replied, that I could not give him the information he desired, as I had never visited the fortress, and was only on my way thither; but knowing the inferiority of Spanish to English cloth, I recommended him not to make the attempt. His system of business was a simple one. At the commencement of summer he started with his *cargas* of cloth from Catalonia, and wandered from town to town to the furthest limits of the kingdom. When the stock was all disposed of, he then sold his mules, returned homewards to spend the winter, and on the following summer started with a fresh cargo. "Now," continued he, "I am going to count my money: that I dare not do in presence of the gente below, in case—" and thereupon, drawing his hand in a significant manner across his throat, he indicated the fate that awaited it should he display his gold before their eyes. Unwinding the long sash round his waist, he extracted a leathern bag from a pouch at one end, and poured its glittering contents on the table. I remarked among the gold pieces a goodly number of *onzas*, and drew the inference that his

wanderings had not been unprofitable. Then restoring the bag to its place in the girdle, the usual purse of Spaniards in his rank of life, he folded it round his body, and wishing me a journey on the morrow "without novelty," took his departure.

On the following morning we were skirting a portion of the great plain of the Guadalquivir. On the left hand stretched the precipitous ranges by which it is bounded on the south, but in the opposite direction the horizon receded into the far distance, enclosing a wide tract of the level but fertile region. About a league from Archidona a lonely mass of rock rises loftily from the plain, and presents on the western side a perpendicular cliff. This is called the "Peña de los Enamorados," the "Rock of the Lovers;" and though I questioned Juan and some other travellers who had joined us regarding the origin of this romantic title, neither legend nor moving incident could I elicit, and, in default thereof, I must leave the reader's imagination to supply one. Then, a league further on, came Antequera, picturesquely resting in a hollow between two mountain ridges; on its northern side

extended a broad belt of olive plantations, among which white cottages gleamed; and on the outskirts of the dark mass of foliage there were scattered farm-houses, each one a picture of rural wealth and security. Such a prospect is rare in Andalucia, and was the more striking here from its contrast to the general aspect of the country on the right, which, though fertile, had all the features of a weary land, wherein no green leaf nor great rock threw its friendly shade.

The inhabitants of Antequera enjoy the reputation of being "*muy mala gente*"—so affirmed a couple of farmers who rode beside us, and vied with each other in recounting tales of their lawless deeds. Robbery, in all its branches, was the favourite profession of the sons of Antequera; and besides being proficient in the usual methods of gaining a livelihood by this means, they had displayed an adroitness, peculiar to themselves, in kidnapping travellers and residents, in order to extract a ransom from their friends. Sometimes, but very rarely it happened that discovery followed their attempts, so ingeniously were their plans laid; but on one occasion, when an abduction had been successfully

effected, the perpetrators were detected in the following manner.

A party had seized and carried off the son of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, and had succeeded in conveying him without discovery to a house in the town. By blindfolding the individuals thus seized, and conducting them by circuitous routes, and under cover of night, it was rendered impossible for the keenest eye to trace their retreat; and the individuals themselves, on being released, were equally at a loss to know where they had been confined, for the same precautions were taken on their being set at liberty. In like manner, no clue likely to lead to detection was to be obtained within the place of durance itself, as the captives were confined to a chamber from which every prospect was carefully excluded. So it fared ill with this young man, who wearily passed some days and nights in his darkened apartment, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, and a prey to anxiety regarding his fate. One day, however, he heard a scream in the adjoining house, where hitherto all had been silence; and putting his ear to the wall, was enabled to distinguish the voices and even the words of the speakers.

The outcry arose from a woman having fallen on the staircase and broken a leg. Among the various directions and orders to which the accident gave rise, his ear caught the command to run for the doctor, whose name was mentioned at length. This information he treasured up, and so on being liberated it was no difficult matter to ascertain the address of the doctor, and from him learn where the accident had occurred. Afterwards the justicias * were put upon the scent; and "por fin," added my informant, the evildoers were recognised and condemned to ten years of presidio.

I had, however, been accustomed to connect Antequera in my thoughts with associations of a very different and more pleasing character than those suggested by such stories as the preceding, and could not so readily bring my mind to admit the idea that it was little better than a den of thieves and kidnappers. My prepossessions were founded on the following touching incident of the olden times, in which the name of the town is introduced. The tale is related by C  nde at the conclusion of his *Historia de la Dominacion de los Arabes en Espana*.

At the time when Antequera was in possession of the Christians, and was a frontier post against

the kingdom of Granada, its alcaide was a caballero named Narvaez. As was customary, he made inroads upon the territory of Granada, sometimes in person, but at other times by followers whom he despatched for that end: the same custom prevailed among the Granadinos upon that frontier district. It came to pass on one occasion, that Narvaez despatched certain horsemen to scour the country; and these, setting forth at a suitable hour, penetrated far within the confines of Granada. Throughout their journey they found no other prize than a valiant youth, who was proceeding in the manner that shall be here told; and, as it was night, he was prevented from escaping, for he unexpectedly encountered the horsemen of Narvaez: and so, as they perceived that no more prey was to be gained, and being furthermore apprised by their captive that the campiña was cleared, on the following morning they returned to Ronda and presented him to their chief. The youth was of the age of twenty-two or twenty-three years, a caballero, and of graceful appearance; he wore a surcoat of purple silk elegantly ornamented, and a short but very fine toque over a scarlet bonnet; his horse was of the best, and he bore a lance and target wrought in the

style of those carried by the principal Moors. Narvaez inquired of him who he was, and he replied that he was the son of the alcaide of Ronda, who was well known to the Christians for a valiant warrior. Being questioned whither he was proceeding, he returned no answer, but wept so much that tears impeded his utterance. Said Narvaez, "I marvel much that thou, who art a cavalier, and the son of so valiant a father, shouldst be so overcome, and, knowing that these are the ordinary misfortunes of war, shouldst thus weep like a woman, while thy mien is that of a soldier and caballero."

"I do not weep," answered the Moor, "because I am in captivity, nor for being thy prisoner, nor are these tears for the loss of my liberty; but for another and a greater loss, which afflicts me more than the state in which I now see myself."

On hearing these words, Narvaez pressed him to unfold the cause of his grief, and the Moor continued:

"Know, then, that for a long time I have loved the daughter of the alcaide of such a castle, and have served her loyally, many times fighting in her behalf against you Christians; and she, recognising these obligations, was resolved to become my bride,

and had intimated to me her willingness to accompany me to my home, leaving that of her father for the love of me; and while I was proceeding, overjoyed, and anticipating the completion of my happiness, it so pleased my evil destiny that I should be surprised by your horsemen, and should be bereft of liberty, and the happiness and good fortune I promised myself. If this appears to thee a thing unworthy of tears, I know not how to shew the sorrow that fills me."

So great was the commiseration felt by Narvacz, that he said, "Thou art a caballero; and if as a cavalier thou engagest to return to duresse, I will grant thee leave upon thy word and honour."

The Moor assented, and, giving his parole, departed; and that night reached the castle where his lady was, and found means to apprise her that he had arrived. She, on her part, contrived to afford him an opportunity of conversing privately; but all the discourse of the Moor was a torrent of tears, unaccompanied by words. The lady, amazed at the sight, said, "How is this? Dost thou lament now that thy wishes may be realised, and thou hast it in thy power to bear me hence?"

But the Moor answered: "Know, that as I was

coming to see thee, I was captured by the horsemen of Ronda, who carried me to Narvaez; and he, like a worthy caballero, on learning my evil fate, took compassion on me, and on my word of honour granted me leave to see thee. And thus I come, not as a free man, but as a slave: and since my liberty is gone, God forbid that, loving you as I do, I should bear thee where thine would be lost also; I will return, for I have pledged my word, and will seek to ransom myself and visit thee again."

The Moorish lady then said: "Hitherto thou hast testified thy affection, and now thou givest the best proof of it, having so deep a regard for my liberty; but since thou art so worthy a caballero as to study what is due to me and to thy plighted word, God forbid that I should be the wife of any one but thee. And although thou mayest refuse, I will yet accompany thee; and if thou art to be a slave, I shall be one also; and if God shall give thee liberty, he will give it to me likewise. Here is a coffer with very precious jewels: take me behind thee on thy steed, for I am well pleased to become the companion of thy misfortunes."

Having said this, she quitted the castle, and he raised her to the croup of his horse; and on the fol-

lowing day they reached Ronda, and presented themselves before Narvaez, who received them with distinction and entertained them with festivities, making them presents, and celebrating the love of the Moorish lady and the honour and truth of the Moor; and on the following day he gave them license to return in freedom to their own land, and caused them to be escorted until they were placed in safety. This adventure—the affection of the damsel and of the Granadino, and, above all, the generosity of Narvaez, was much celebrated by the good cavaliers of Granada, and was sung in verses of the most famous poets of the times.

About two leagues from Antequera appeared the village of Fuente de la Piedra, embosomed in olive woods, which are abundant here; the country around was well cultivated, and now began to undulate and to rise into gentle slopes, for we were approaching a mountain district. A short way from the last-named village, a lake came into view—a rare sight in Andalusia, and, indeed, in other provinces of Spain; but even had it been less unfrequent, the singular spectacle it exhibited would have attracted the most careless eye. It was a lake of salt, whose surface was covered with a saline incrustation

white as snow, that sparkled and glanced in the sunshine as if strewn with diamonds. As salt is a monopoly in the hands of government, this natural article was carefully watched by a band of guardas—Juan said as many as three hundred—lest the article should be abstracted by the surrounding population, and the revenue thereby injured. Such a restriction, like the whole prohibitory system of Spain, only tended to foster smuggling, without benefiting the nation; and here its effects were manifest: we ourselves espied a peasant ensconced along with his burro in a bush, evidently with the design of stealing down to the lake on the first favourable opportunity, and filling the sacks his animal carried. Sometimes the cordon has been broken in a more audacious style. A few years ago there was a rising *en masse* of the country people, by whom the guardas were overpowered and expelled from their stations. Every one then helped himself, and continued to do so for the space of three weeks, during which time there was free access to the lake; at last a detachment of troops came up from Malaga, by whom affairs were restored to their former footing. Such are the “cosas de Espana!” Two leagues more concluded the journey for the

day, which terminated at the clean little town of Campillos; its posada was no exception to the general appearance of the pueblo, and proved to be one of the best in Andalucia.

Next morning, after traversing a wide open plain, with low hills in the distance, we reached the frontier sierras of the mountainous region of Ronda; thenceforward the bold and picturesque replaced the tame scenery of the plain. Our way wound up a pass by a rugged bridle-road, each step of the ascent revealing some new feature of the varied prospect—some peak, crag, or ravine, that had been invisible from below. Off looking back, the great plain of the Guadalquivir presented a magnificent panorama of richness and fertility, its broad tracts of cultivation being mingled with gently rising eminences, and the whole diversified with hamlets and villages. At the summit of the pass a new scene was unfolded to our eyes. We looked down upon a deep circular valley, teeming with the signs of successful industry. Olive plantations and orchards clung to its sides; snug farmhouses, shaded by forest trees, occupied conspicuous positions; and surrounding the whole rose a rugged wall of craggy ridges and naked peaks, as barren and sunburnt as the hollow at their

feet was green and fruitful. Then, as we proceeded, the castle of this mountain valley made itself visible, perched on the summit of a singular mass of rock that overhung the woody vale below. Its roofless towers and ruined battlements betokened that danger had ceased to lower above the peaceful scene, and that the husbandman no longer sought their shelter from the storm of war; behind it a few cottages peeped forth, half hidden by its dark walls, which concealed from view the pueblo to which they belonged. The name of this fortress and pueblo is Teba Cond; and, uncouth as the words sound, there is to a Scotchman an historic interest connected with them that must make them dear to his national pride. By some writers this secluded vale is made the scene of the gallant achievement that closed the eventful life of Douglas, the friend and companion in arms of Robert the Bruce. Conde, however, places it before the pueblo of Teba de Ardales, about a league to the southward of this spot. At the time I passed by this route I was unaware of this fact, or even of the existence of another Teba, as the pueblo he mentions is designated in Spanish maps by no other title than Ardales; but though pressed for time, I could not have denied myself the

gratification of seeking the field where the "good Sir James" shouted for the last time the war-cry of his house, and resigned his life to the chivalrous impulses of his nature. "Observing a knight of his own company to be surrounded by a body of Moors, who had suddenly rallied, 'Alas!' said he, 'yonder worthy knight shall perish but for present help;' and with the few men who now attended him, amounting to no more than ten, he turned hastily to attempt his rescue. He soon found himself hard pressed by the numbers who thronged upon him. Taking from his neck the silver casquet which contained the heart of Bruce, he threw it before him among the thickest of the enemy, saying, 'Now pass thou onward before us as thou wert wont, and I will follow thee or die.' Douglas and almost the whole of the brave men who fought by his side were here slain. His body and the casquet containing the embalmed heart of Bruce were found together upon the field, and were by his surviving companions conveyed with great care and reverence into Scotland."

The scenery which succeeds this romantic valley is strikingly beautiful, and incomparably superior to anything of the kind in Andalucia. For many a

mile it presents a series of unequalled prospects, which, as the track generally led along the summit of elevated ridges, were at once varied and commanding. Deep valleys clothed with vineyards, corn-fields, and olive-groves, tempted the eye to look down and survey their beauties: and when sated with the smiling scene, it had only to direct a glance upwards to behold villages nestling high among crags and glens, or perched upon woody terraces projecting from the sides of the mountains; or, if willing to rove further, there were picturesque peaks in the distance, blue as the heavens above them, and divested of their natural wildness by the celestial hue they wore. After a ride of six hours I alighted at the Venta del Ciego, feeling somewhat acutely the effects of mountain air upon the appetite. The usual query, "Have you any eggs?" was answered in the negative. "What else?" "Bacalao." Not being disposed to try the stockfish, which in the ventas is more famous for its "ancient and fishlike smell" than for its savoury qualities, I contented myself with a frugal repast of melons and bread, washed down by the strong wine of the neighbourhood. While thus engaged, a peasant entered, and placed in the hands of the host a box

of rude workmanship, one side of which was formed of glass instead of wood. The whole company burst out into raptures of admiration at the beauty of the object the case contained. Mine host kissed it reverently, his spouse and children did the same, and all testified the highest veneration for so wonderful a work of art. After being sufficiently lauded, the image—for it was an image of the Virgin that the box enshrined—was handed to me; and my heretical eyes discovered it to be a common doll, imbedded in a profusion of artificial flowers, which, to all appearance, had at one time adorned some fair one's bonnet. The image was highly esteemed for its medical virtues, and was a sovereign remedy against the ills to which cattle, horses, and pigs were subject.

From the venta the track still continued to wind among the finest mountain scenery imaginable, until, on gaining the crest of a high ridge, the towers and spires of Ronda were distinguished. We had, however, ere reaching it, to traverse a broad plain thickly clothed with vineyards and olive-grounds, particularly the latter, which in the vicinity of the town supersede every other description of tree. From this, the northern side, the aspect

of Ronda is far from striking, and fails to realise one's ideal of a mountain capital. Its outline of dark walls rises but little above the level of the fertile basin in which it stands; and but for the lofty circle of sierras in the background, and the remembrance of the rugged path he has pursued with hazard and toil, the spectator might fancy it a city of a plain, rather than the metropolis of a wild assemblage of elevations. Yet, although the ground in the vicinity tends to favour this resemblance, its altitude above the level of the sea cannot be less than fifteen hundred feet; and of this the traveller becomes painfully conscious as he climbs the rapid and precipitous ascents which form its only approaches. It is, however, after entering the gates of Ronda, that one is introduced to the extraordinary natural wonder which proclaims it to be one of the most singular of European towns. Let the reader imagine a compact and walled town cloven in twain by a fearful chasm nigh three hundred feet deep, from the bottom of which a foaming and boiling stream sends its roar upwards. All communication between the divided portions is as effectually cut off as if seas rolled between; and, but for a bridge that spans the void at its narrowest

part, the inhabitants on one side would be denied all intercourse with those on the other, except by the toilsome mode of descending by circuitous paths to the bed of the stream, and ascending in a similar fashion the opposite cliff. Standing on this bridge, the spectacle in sight is one that excites mingled sensations of dread, awe, and wonder. The spectator overhangs a dark and narrow gulf at a giddy height, and from that position, perilous, as fancy calls it, scans with unwonted feelings the yawning fissure over which he is suspended, The precipices of solid rock that enclose it, the deep-sunk bed of the river, the hollow murmurs it gives forth, the gloom that shrouds its waters, and the strange echoes reflected from the cliffs, all leave the most vivid impressions upon his senses, and stamp the scene as one that equals in its reality the pictures which his imagination may have sometimes drawn of a "gulf profound." These are the chief features of the prospect looking towards the east: in the opposite direction the eye commands a wider range, and overlooks the vale to which the river far below is impetuously rushing. It is a sunlit cavity in the heart of rude inequalities; and, bounteously adorned as it is with natural beauties, there floats over it a serenity

derived from its lowly position, that gives an exquisite effect to each charm. The river now winds in slackened course between steep though verdant banks; gardens and vineyards cling to the slopes; cottages embowered in orange-groves rise picturesquely upon projecting points, or occupy sunny nooks: all this forms a scene which a painter would select to represent seclusion and peace blended with patient industry and humble happiness. Descending to the bed of the river by a steep and winding path on the western side of the bridge, the view, again looking towards the east, is little less striking than from above. In front rises the ponderous bridge—so massive in its construction as to seem rather placed for the purpose of preventing the sides of the chasm from collapsing, than for arching the intervening space. Over the rocks at its foundation a stream of foam is precipitated in the form of a cascade, and falls but a short distance from an antique mill, apparently about to be crushed by the huge rocks that overhang it. Then looking through the arch of the bridge as through a portal, the eye travels up the river-worn pass, and sees it bounded by precipices whose foundations are laid in unbroken gloom: on

their summits, however, the sunbeams strike, and along the dangerous verge rise a succession of dwellings, whose white walls, pierced by windows, appear to lean over the abyss. The whole scene is a combination of savage grandeur and picturesque effect, which far surpasses the power of words to describe; but, with its gloom, its lofty walls of rock, and wild features, often rises before the memory of the spectator.

From the summit of the precipice on the southern side, a staircase cut out of the solid rock descends to the bed of the river, and ranks among the wonders of Ronda. This, which is called the Mina, has its entrance from a dwelling styled the Casa Real. The old housekeeper who opened the door showed me into the sala, while she went to procure a lantern, and summon a servant to conduct me down the ancient and now disused communication. In the room my attention was struck by an old-fashioned door, upon which was painted a likeness of Queen Isabella the Catholic, and apparently of an ancient date: in her right hand she bore the sceptre of state, and in the left hand corner of the picture the arms of Castile were distinguishable. When the old lady returned, I inquired if there was any

history attached to this venerable portrait of the Queen Isabel. "La Reina Isabel!" exclaimed she and her handmaiden, with broad smiles on their countenances; "that is a picture of Santa Barbara, and she is the patron saint of the house. Ave Maria! what a strange mistake!" And upon this their merriment at my expense broke out anew. It would have been cruel to have shaken their belief in what was manifestly an article of their faith, so I contented myself with indulging my mirth at their expense as soon as the door closed behind me. It was nothing, however, to that of the worshippers of Santa Barbara, for as I crossed the court I could hear them giving free vent to their amusement at the ludicrous error into which they supposed I had fallen.

In a small garden on the brink of the precipice was the entrance to the staircase: after descending a few yards, every appearance of steps was lost, and in their place an inclined plane of rubbish presented itself. Down this we slid or stumbled, having on the one side massive walls with loopholes for the admission of light, and, as we descended lower, on either hand a variety of dungeons, small, dismal, and dark. At the bottom a door gave egress; and

stepping out, we stood in the bed of the river: its waters, imprisoned between the lofty precipices that excluded all but a narrow strip of heaven from our eyes, had a sullen aspect, and moved sluggishly among the masses of rock that encumbered their channel. Their olive-green hue recalled the epithet of "verdé," which is given to this stream in the well-known ballad commencing with:—

Rio verde, rio verde,
Tinto vas en sangre viva.
Entre ti y Sierra Bermeja
Murio gran cavalleria.

O rio verde, river green,
All dark with life's blood is thy flow,
The red sierra and thee between
A gallant chivalry lies low.

From the river the prospect was imposing in the extreme: the lofty walls of rock that rose frowningly in the air, the gloom and silence brooding over the spot, and the dark stream at our feet, all mingled with the prison-like air of the dwellings visible to impress the mind with awe; and recollecting the blood-stained history of the town, it was not difficult to fancy that the sullen river had witnessed many a deed in keeping with the character of the scenery. From this point it is seen, that of the Mina the upper part alone is hewn out of the

rock. About half way down, a natural cleft occurs in the precipice, of which advantage has been taken; and being enclosed with solid masonry, it was an easy matter to carry the staircase downwards. According to tradition, it was the weary task of the Christian captives to carry up supplies of water by this passage to the town above; and there are shown on the sides of the staircase certain crosses, said to have been engraved by the nails of the captives thus employed. This is a favourite legend in Andalusia, and there are several places where the traveller sees crosses, alleged, like those in the Mina, to have been the work of pious nails; in particular, there is one in the mosque at Cordova, which tradition affirms to have been wrought in this manner by a captive, who was chained for many years to the pillar upon which it occurs. Regarding this instance, it is scarcely necessary to point out the improbability of the tale; as the well-known prejudice of Mahomedans against the admission of Christians into their temples renders it far from likely that, in the days of Moorish fanaticism, a dog of a Christian captive would be permitted to outrage their most holy fane with his presence, far

less to sculpture within its precincts the hated emblem of Christianity.

Ronda is supposed to occupy the site of the Arunda of the Romans, by whom its importance as a defensible position could hardly have been overlooked. After the Arabs became masters of the province, it rose from its ruins into a town of note, and was then, as now, the capital of the mountain community who dwell in the surrounding fastnesses. These observations, however, apply only to that portion of the town which lies on the southern side of the Guadiaro; the edifices in the opposite quarter are of a more modern character than those in the old town, and, it is probable, date only from the days of the conquistadores. On the decline of the kingdom of Granada, the surrounding district was dismembered from its territories in 1328, and for a time converted into a separate kingdom, of which Ronda was the head. The head of this petty state was an African prince, who appears to have wrested it by force of arms from the native monarchs; but on the accession of Muley Mahomed the Fourth to the throne of Granada, the invaders were expelled, and Ronda was again incorporated with the last of

the Andalucian monarchies. Thenceforward its name occurs but seldom in the Moorish chronicles until the era of Ferdinand and Isabella again brings it forward, in the year 1485, to maintain an obstinate defence against its Christian assailants. The valour of its inhabitants, however, was of little avail against the overpowering forces of the besiegers; and after having vainly sought succour from Granada, they were constrained to yield the town to their foes.

The population of Ronda now amounts to nearly 14,000 inhabitants. Trade and manufactures are despised by its citizens, whose chief occupation is to smuggle goods from Gibraltar into the interior of the province. For this the position of their native town is admirably adapted; surrounded by wild sierras, which are traversed in every direction by multitudes of mountain paths, it is as well fitted to receive as it is to convey to other districts the cargoes of the contrabandista. Hence the population of the Serrania bear a reputation for lawlessness, which is not wholly undeserved. Their dusky sierras have not only fostered the wild love of independence characteristic of mountaineers, but, from being the theatre of an open warfare against the

laws, have engendered a turbulent spirit, which it is at all times difficult for the Spanish Government to repress, and which occasionally sets its utmost powers at defiance. During the Guerra de Independencia, the Serranos kept their French invaders in a state of continual disquietude—sometimes by open resistance, sometimes by a hollow submission, which rose into revolt on the first favourable opportunity. M. Rocca, in his graphic account of the operations of the French in the Serrania, faithfully paints the savage characters of the mountaineers, and their unconquerable hostility to the Gavachos—the term of contempt invariably applied by Spaniards to his countrymen. On one* occasion their detestation took a ludicrous turn, and at the village of Olbera, to the northward of Ronda, some of his compatriots were treated to a repast which consisted of asses' flesh. The Frenchmen found the veal, as it was called, rather tough, but did not discover the mistake until some time afterwards, when it was necessary to meet their entertainers in warlike fashion; they were then saluted with the cry, "You ate asses' flesh at Olbera!" and from that time every other taunt they had been accustomed to hear was supplanted by this one, in the application of which

their mountain opponents appeared to derive an exquisite satisfaction.

Besides a plaza de toros, said to be one of the best in Spain, Ronda possesses an alameda, the site of which is picturesque in the extreme. Its shady walks extend along the brow of a precipice, from whence, as he inhales the western breeze, the spectator casts his eye over an unequalled prospect of valley, river, and mountain. Far below him winds the Guadiaro amid the softest features of a vale—verdant slopes, hanging groves, cottages embowed in orchards, and grey mills leaning over its stream: as the view widens, its expression becomes more wildly beautiful; an amphitheatre of mountains encloses this rejoicing Eden, their acclivities diversified by glens and woody dells with which the sunshine plays capriciously; and beyond their broken outlines are seen those distant blue peaks which are seldom wanting in an Andalucian landscape, and here remind the observer that he is in the heart of an alpine region.

The departure of a couple of mules is an hourly occurrence at large inns, yet it had not lost the charm of novelty for that host of idlers who are

to be met with in Ronda as in all Spanish towns. On descending to the street, I found Juan in the centre of a group of men in tattered brown cloaks, whose eyes followed his movements as he loaded the animals, while their lips were occupied with paper cigars. One, who was distinguished from the others by smoking a 'puro,' had got hold of my double-barrelled gun, and was showing to a circle of listeners how it was fired. "You see, when you fire the right barrel, you must put the gun to the right shoulder; but when you fire the left, then you must put it to the left shoulder." The explanation appeared quite satisfactory to his audience. With one voice they exclaimed, "What a wonderful gun!" and regarded the speaker as an oracle of knowledge. The same individual, a swarthy little man, in whose piercing eye there was expressed fully as much cunning as intelligence, then accosted Juan. The method he took to ingratiate himself with that trusty personage, proved that he was better acquainted with the road to Spanish sympathies than with the mode of discharging double-barrels. His first query related to the birth-place of my mozo. "I am from Santa Cruz," said Juan.

"Well, how strange!" added the other; "I am from the same town." "But I was brought up in Granada." "Well, still more strange! I was brought up there also. Vamos, paysano, vamos á la bodega!" (Come, my countryman, let us go to the tavern.) Juan, however, turned a deaf ear to this invitation, which he well knew concealed some sinister purpose either towards himself or his master, and bluntly bade his paysano stand aside.

Passing down a long and narrow street adorned with some handsome houses, we quitted the town by a road which was bounded on one side by an ancient Moorish wall. This quarter had been fortified by the Moors with more than usual care, as was evident from the abundant remains of the defences with which they had surrounded it. Of these there appeared to have been three separate lines, each one capable of opposing an effectual resistance to an enemy, and thus triply guarding what was naturally the weakest point of the city; for on this side are wanting the crags and precipices which everywhere else defy the approach of war. Seen from the southward, the position of Ronda is far more cha-

racteristic of the mountain kingdom it represents than from the opposite direction. The fruitful basin still meets the eye, its surface shadowed with foliage or yellow with corn-fields; but in the midst rises a rocky height, upon which the city stands in conscious security. Begirt with inaccessible steeps, whose summits are surmounted by walls of massive strength, it looks the war-loving stronghold, the citadel of a fierce mountain race, to whom warfare was once the breath of their nostrils, and whose descendants even yet retain the unquiet spirit of their fiery ancestors.

Descending the other side of the heights from which we had surveyed this striking scene, we plunged deep among the roots of an assemblage of mountains, lofty, wild, and wrapped in the brown mantle of sterility. Our path was both execrable and dangerous; leading sometimes over the polished surface of the sloping rock, or winding between huge masses detached from the summits, with the occasional variety of a precipice on one hand to enhance its perils. As we came to the bottom of a wild hollow, it passed by a roofless dwelling. I inquired of a peasant, who had shortly before joined

us, what the place had been; and was informed that it had once been a venta, and was demolished by authority.

“Why so?”

“When a venta is destroyed by authority,” replied the man, “every body knows the reason; it was a notorious harbouring place for robbers, and was in consequence pulled down.”

In truth, a fitter spot for the outlaw's deeds could hardly be found: on either hand the venta commanded a view of the track as it wound by a long descent to its door; and in front was the mouth of a narrow ravine, down which the robber could dive and in a few moments be lost to sight.

Gradually the scenery changed after we had passed the village of Atajate, about ten miles from Ronda; and the country, though still mountainous and rugged, wore the cheering smile of cultivation, and began to be diversified with woods and vegetation. Like the approach to Ronda from the north, the path led along the crest of a high ridge, from whence the eye scanned with ease the winding course of the picturesque valleys on either side, and through openings in the surrounding sierras caught glimpses

of distant steeps upon which pine forests hung, or more rarely of mountain fortresses, capping with their weather-stained circlet of ruins some lonely crag. Within the valleys was to be seen a combination of natural beauties and the gladdening works of industry: now the path threaded an olive-grove, or skirted some sunny slope; now the vines hung their tempting clusters over our heads; and on mounting higher the scene was varied by the view of dark passes, wooded heights, and all the bolder features of a mountain landscape. What added to the animation of the prospect was the number of villages and hamlets which clung to the acclivities, each one within its own little domain of garden and foliage. Some lay deep in the valleys, and were only half seen amid a surrounding growth of trees, but the greater number had climbed to loftier sites, "*adondese despeñan las palomas*," as Juan poetically phrased it; and either crowned some craggy platform with white edifices, or retired within sheltered recesses overhung by cliffs, and accessible only by winding paths from below.

It was dark when we reached Gaucin and entered its solitary *posada*, after traversing a long street

through which the wind swept coldly. *Indeed, from the moment the sun had descended beneath the horizon, we had felt the temperature sensibly lowered, and were glad to wrap ourselves in our mantas on account of the wind, which at the same time began to rise, and before we arrived at the inn was blowing down the ravines in sharp gusts. For the first time during my wanderings I felt chilled, and would have hailed a blazing fire with satisfaction. But no such welcome sight awaited us in the posada. Here, as in every posada in the province, the sole fireplace in the house was that which served for cooking the meals of the household and strangers; and a more cheerless hearth can hardly be imagined. It was placed at one end of a large apartment, half stable half kitchen, the floor of which seemed to have been modelled after the roughly-paved street outside, and was scarcely so clean. At first sight it appeared a mere mass of masonry built up against the wall to the height of three or four feet; but on closer inspection the structure was seen to be perforated by a row of apertures, from which some heat was felt to proceed. These apertures are, in fact, furnaces on a diminu-

tive scale, and when required for the purposes of cooking are filled with charcoal. This fuel, however, though it gives out a considerable degree of heat, demands constant nursing, so that half the time of the cook is consumed in coaxing it into a glow by means of primitive fans of esparto. Comfortless as it looked, this was the only place where some warmth was to be had; and drawing my stool close to it, I endeavoured to fancy I was protected against the keenness of the mountain air that rushed in at the open gate and a hundred loopholes. Meanwhile, a slipshod damsel was preparing supper; Juan having opportunely purchased a rabbit from a boy who was hawking them about the street, and who had followed us into the posada. In a trice the animal was chopped into small pieces, and set to stew in an earthenware pipkin, alongside of another vessel of the same nature, in which our Maritornes proceeded to boil some rice. In due course her labours came to a conclusion: a brown bowl was produced, into which the contents of the pipkins were cast with but little ceremony; next she poured some boiling oil over the mess; and then setting the dish upon a stool, placed beside it a couple

of crusts of bread. The latter, it is necessary to observe, were supplied as substitutes for knives, forks, and spoons, rather than as an addition to the edibles; and accordingly, while Juan seized one, I possessed myself of the other, and plunging it into the pilaw, contrived to extract a portion and to burn my fingers at the same time. The "rage of hunger," however, makes light of such obstacles: in a wonderfully short space of time our fingers met at the bottom of the bowl, having carried everything before them, and then we stopped; but this was not enough for Juan, for his last bone being picked, he finished off with devouring the faithful crust he wielded. This done, he proceeded to smoke his "papel," while I retreated to the chamber in the upper story, to which I climbed by rickety wooden stairs. "There," said Maritornes, who had shown the way, "there is a cama fit for gente decente." I ventured to question the fitness of the eulogium, after a slight inspection of the wretched apology for a bed to which she pointed. The coverlet and sheets had a wondrous dingy aspect, more especially the latter, which, besides, bore witness to the sanguinary attacks of the native

population upon the persons of the last occupants. This, however, was nothing new to my eyes; and moreover, having the prospect of sleeping beneath an English roof the following night, I was little inclined to be fastidious on the last occasion I was to encounter the discomforts of a Spanish posada. But, before stretching myself on a couch where it was manifest the pulga and chinche lorded it over the sleeper, I put in practice certain precautions which will explain to the reader why in these pages he has met with no such passages as "Passed a sleepless night, occasioned by the assaults of the carnivorous inhabitants of the bed. Rose early, glad to escape from the vampyres who tenanted my couch," &c., &c.

The truth is, that the writers of these complaints have themselves to blame in no small degree for undergoing the sufferings which they recount for the benefit of the public. They carry their English habits into pulga-ridden Spain, and dispose themselves to rest upon the notoriously populated beds in the same fashion in which they would court sleep in an English chamber. Now this is tantamount to offering themselves up to be sacrificed; and if it

be done through an obstinate adherence to national customs, the complainers, I repeat, have little right to our sympathy for their murdered repose. Let them provide themselves, as some have done, with a huge sack, in which to encase their persons before lying down to rest—or, as I found equally effectual and much more convenient, with loose drawers enclosing the feet, and drawn round the waist by a cord—and I venture to predict their rest will be untroubled by nocturnal assailants. To this, if their quarters be very suspicious, let them add cotton gloves for the hands, nightcap, and neckcloth, and their armour is then complete. If the places of joining be carefully secured, nothing can penetrate it; and they will enjoy the satisfaction, should they awake at night, of beholding their pillow beleaguered in vain by a multitude of nightly disturbers.

Before daybreak I was on the way to Gibraltar, which it was necessary to reach before sunset. For more than an hour the path was a series of precipitous descents, down which our mules slid and scrambled, without however once missing their footing. At length we reached the bed of a torrent,

and which thenceforward was our road. On looking back, as soon as the light permitted a view to be caught, the scene was strikingly beautiful. Lofty mountains rose in every variety of wild shape that crag and forest could compose; high among them was perched the village we had quitted, now glistening like a snow-patch, for the morning sun was shining strongly on its whitened dwellings, and adding to their brilliancy. Then, in a short time, the whole prospect underwent a transformation. A thunderstorm gathered upon the highest peaks, and slowly settling down upon the lower elevations, gradually buried each feature in darkness: the glistening village was blotted out by a gloomy mass of cloud; the crags around it lost their ragged outlines and became indistinct forms of vapour; while the sight of long columns of mist descending by the valleys and ravines was a pretty sure sign that, ere long, we too should feel the wrath of the elements. Juan, however, predicted that the storm would expend its fury on the mountains alone; but in half-an-hour it was upon us. The rain came down like a cascade, and drove so furiously against the faces of our animals, that instinctively they turned

aside and buried their heads in a thicket of under-wood by the bank of the torrent. For ourselves, we followed their example; or rather, wrapping our heads in our mantas, sat down under the bank to await the termination of the deluge. In another half-hour it had passed off, and we resumed our march down the stream. From this we diverged, ere long, to enter the noble forest of cork-trees that almost continuously stretches to San Roque, on the Bay of Gibraltar. On mounting a rising ground, the Rock itself came distinctly into view. At that distance its appearance resembled a huge wedge resting on its base, with an abrupt end turned towards Spain. We were, however, still a long way from it; and it was a journey of many hours through the picturesque forest—which, however, enjoys but an indifferent reputation on the score of honesty—before we climbed the acclivity on which San Roque is situated. On the other side the waters of the bay spread out; and descending again to the sandy beach that bounds them, we urged our tired animals along this natural road, in order to reach the fortress before sunset, the hour at which the gates are closed. Half-an-hour before that time I had passed through

the Spanish lines in front of the fortress; and after having at the gate certified to the officer on guard that Juan meditated no villany against the Rock and its numerous garrison, I was suffered to pass in, and found myself in Gibraltar.

THE END.

